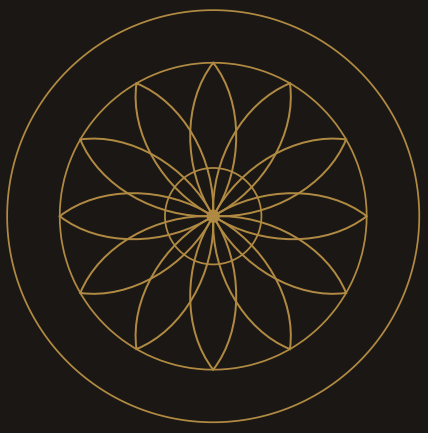


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Hinduism

Dharmic family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

Before you begin

This is the record of Hinduism 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*.

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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 Hinduism 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	Hinduism has ~1.1–1.2 billion adherents. **ACADEMIC SOURCE** · Pew, Indian census
WHO'S IN CHARGE	The Shankaracharya seats, four historic monastic thrones (mathas), carry immense prestige and no command, and no office speaks for the tradition.
CHOSEN BY	Lineage designation.
REMOVABLE BY	No removal procedure is recorded.
MONEY IN ONE LINE	The money sits in temple economies. Tirupati, one of India's richest temples, recorded a net worth of ₹2.26 lakh crore in its own 2022 white paper (section 9); many major temples are administered by state governments — governments literally managing and drawing on temple wealth. **FINANCIAL RECORD / OFFICIAL POLICY** · state temple endowment acts

LEAVING IN ONE LINE	Caste operates as a birth-assigned enforcement grid; inter-caste marriage still triggers ostracism and violence in documented cases. GOVERNMENT REPORT / COURT RECORD · honor-killing prosecutions
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	Untouchability has been unconstitutional since 1950. Which religious authority has ever taken responsibility for what doctrine sanctified?
EVIDENCE	Two of the 30 techniques are sourced to a named document. The grades are Cultural 24, Taught 6, Documented 0 and Codified 0.
FAMILY	Dharmic — hinduism, hare-krishna, sikhism, jainism
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

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

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 "Lineage designation", and to who can remove its holder, "No removal procedure is recorded". 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, a public safeguarding policy, a written removal procedure or on-the-record replies. 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.

Lakshmi · A Tuesday before Diwali · A district town in southern India

Up at five to sweep the threshold and draw the kolam (the pattern traced at the threshold each morning), which her mother taught her and which she will teach her daughter, and which is the small daily beauty she would defend against any argument in any language.

The priest comes at seven for the monthly puja (ritual worship). Two hundred rupees, which is not the problem. The problem is that the amount was two hundred last year and is two hundred and fifty this year and nobody discusses it, and that her husband's family has used this priest for four generations and there is no other priest, because this is his family's right.

At the office a colleague asks, in the way people ask, what her surname is. Lakshmi gives it. She watches the calculation happen behind the woman's eyes and she watches it complete. Nothing changes in the conversation. Everything is now settled.

Her daughter Meena is nineteen and in love with a boy from the wrong street. Lakshmi knows about it because a neighbour told her, kindly, as a warning. She has not told her husband. She lies awake at night doing the arithmetic of what will happen if she tells him and what will happen if she doesn't and both columns end somewhere she cannot look at directly.

At lunch she reads on her phone that the temple trust in the next district has assets worth crores (a crore is ten million rupees) and that the state has moved some of it, and she thinks of the gold bangles her mother-in-law gave to that temple in 1998 for her son's health, and then she stops thinking about it because there is nothing to do with the thought.

In the evening she lights the lamp and the whole room changes, the way it has changed every evening of her life, and she says the words her grandmother said. Then Meena comes in and asks if she can go out on Saturday and Lakshmi says *with whom* in a voice she has never used with

her daughter before, and hears her mother-in-law in it, and hates it, and does not take it back.

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.

> There is no pope here, no single book, no membership roll — and you were probably told that means there is nothing to criticize. But control does not need a headquarters. It needs a family, a caste, a guru, and a birth certificate. The absence of a center is not the absence of a machine; in your tradition it is what makes the machine so hard to see.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Untouchability has been unconstitutional since 1950. Which religious authority has ever taken responsibility for what doctrine sanctified?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Hinduism has no dogma, no church, and no excommunication.	True institutionally, and irrelevant to the person disowned by their family for an inter-caste marriage.	GOVERNMENT REPORT

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Caste standing	Yes	Caste is assigned at birth, and inter-caste marriage triggers ostracism and documented violence.	“Caste is a social system, not religion.”

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. There is no institution here, so there is nothing to hold responsible — and caste is culture, not religion.

What is true in it. There genuinely is no central authority, no membership, and no body that can excommunicate anyone. And caste practice does vary enormously by region and community.

The answer. Decentralization is a deniability structure, and the codex says so rather than pretending otherwise. On caste: the text that ranks people is scripture and the constitution that unranked them is not. The anti-caste critique here is Kabir's and Basava's (medieval devotional poet-saints), which predate any Western reading, and Ambedkar's (B. R. Ambedkar, the jurist who chaired the drafting committee of India's constitution), made from inside India.

Sources for this section: [8]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *Untouchability has been unconstitutional since 1950. Which religious authority has ever taken responsibility for what doctrine sanctified?* 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 Hinduism, 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.

> Hinduism has ~1.1–1.2 billion adherents, overwhelmingly in India and Nepal. It is a civilization of paths (devotional, philosophical, ritual and ascetic) with no founder, no central text and no pope.

- Healthy practice here includes the bhakti (devotional) tradition's own anti-clerical stream (saints who mocked priestcraft and caste), anti-caste movements from within and without (the Ambedkarite critique), temple trusts with published accounts, and the tradition's genuine pluralism as a resource against any single authority.

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.

Hinduism has ~1.1–1.2 billion adherents, overwhelmingly in India and Nepal.

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.

Vedic religion (the religion of the Vedas, the oldest Hindu scriptures; 2nd millennium BCE onward) → Upanishadic philosophy (the philosophical texts that close the Vedas) → epic and Puranic devotionalism (devotion centered on the epics and the Puranas) → medieval bhakti movements (devotional movements) and temple economies → colonial-era reform and codification → modern guru movements and political Hindutva (Hindu-nationalist politics).

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



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

1

C. 1500–500 BCE

Vedic religion; ritual specialists; hymns transmitted orally

Priestly monopoly on ritual language — the original knowledge gatekeeping.

2

C. 800–200 BCE

Upanishads; renunciant movements; Buddhism and Jainism emerge in critique

Internal dissent against sacrifice and priestcraft is present from the beginning.

3

C. 200 BCE–500 CE

Dharmashastra literature (Sanskrit legal and ethical treatises, including the Manusmriti); epics; caste codified textually

Social hierarchy acquires scriptural sanction — the most consequential control structure in this profile.

4

500–1500 CE

Temple-building era; vast temple economies; bhakti movements

Enormous institutional wealth alongside devotional movements that explicitly reject caste and priest mediation.

5

1500–1800

Regional kingdoms, temple patronage, matha (monastic institution) networks

Monastic and temple institutions become durable landholders.

6

1757–1947

Colonial rule; 'Hinduism' codified as a single religion; reform movements (Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj)

The category itself is partly a colonial administrative product.

ACADEMIC SOURCE

7 1920S–1947

Hindu nationalist organizations founded; independence and partition

Religious identity becomes a modern political project.

8 1950S–1990S

Constitutional abolition of untouchability; state temple administration; global guru movements

Legal reform proceeds while caste practice persists; Indian states take over major temple funds. OFFICIAL POLICY

9 1992–PRESENT

Ayodhya and the rise of Hindutva to national power

Religious majoritarianism becomes state policy. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

10 2010S–PRESENT

High-profile godman (self-styled holy man with a mass following) rape convictions (Ram Rahim 2017, Asaram 2018; upheld or pending on appeal); temple wealth disclosures

Courts document what devotion had shielded. COURT RECORD

Moments in the room

1927–1932 — Ambedkar burns the Manusmriti; then wins at the table

At Mahad in 1927 Ambedkar publicly burned a copy of the Manusmriti. Five years later, after his hunger-strike confrontation with Gandhi, the Poona Pact settled the electoral question — and the religious sanction for caste was not repudiated by the religious authorities of the day.

Why it matters. Political remedies arrived; doctrinal ones did not. The gap between those two sentences is the whole content of this page's hardest question.

1950 — Untouchability is abolished on paper

Article 17 of the Indian Constitution abolished untouchability and made its practice punishable. It was drafted under Ambedkar's chairmanship of the drafting committee.

Why it matters. The state acted, and no religious authority is recorded on this page as acting. That is why this page's compel column points at courts and endowment departments rather than at any temple.

2017–2018 — A guru is convicted, and a city burns

Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh of Dera Sacha Sauda (a religious sect based in Sirsa, Haryana, that draws on Sikh, Hindu and other traditions) was convicted of rape in 2017, and in 2019 of conspiring to murder a journalist — a conviction overturned on appeal in 2026 and now before

the Supreme Court. The verdict triggered riots in which dozens died [25]. No religious body is recorded on this page as having examined him.

Why it matters. A criminal court was the first institution in decades with both the standing and the will to act. That is not a story about Indian courts; it is a story about the absence of anything above a guru.

Sources for this section: [1] [4] [13] [24] [25]

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

Hinduism 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.

Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta, Smarta traditions; countless sampradayas (traditions of teaching passed down through a line of gurus), guru lineages, and regional folk forms, and philosophical schools from Advaita (non-dualism) to Dvaita (dualism).

STREAM	WHAT IT CENTRES ON	WHERE AUTHORITY SITS
Vaishnava	Vaishnava traditions center on Vishnu and his avatars (incarnations such as Krishna and Rama).	Authority sits with the sampradayas and their acharyas (teachers); the stream includes Swaminarayan (BAPS, the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha) and ISKCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness) [6 13].
Shaiva	Shaiva traditions center on Shiva.	Authority sits with monastic orders (mathas) and lineages.
Shakta	Shakta traditions center on the Goddess.	Authority sits with temples and lineages.

Smarta	Smarta traditions center on several deities and on Advaita philosophy.	Authority sits with the Shankaracharya mathas.
Guru movements	Guru movements center on a living teacher.	Authority sits with the guru, often with a trust or company he controls [14].

There are about **1.2 billion** Hindus, 14.9% of the world's population (2020) [11].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Hinduism, 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	Hinduism has ~1.1–1.2 billion adherents. **ACADEMIC SOURCE** · Pew, Indian census
Regions	Hindus live mainly in India (~1.1B), Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia (Bali) and Mauritius, with diaspora communities in the US, UK, Canada, South Africa, the Caribbean and the Gulf states.
Trend	The number is growing with the population, diaspora institutions are expanding, and Hindutva political mobilization is the major contemporary institutional development.
Participation	There is no membership, no baptism, and no central authority — which means 'adherent' figures reflect census identity, not institutional submission. Most Hindus are under no religious hierarchy at all; control operates through caste, family, guru relationships, and temple institutions locally.

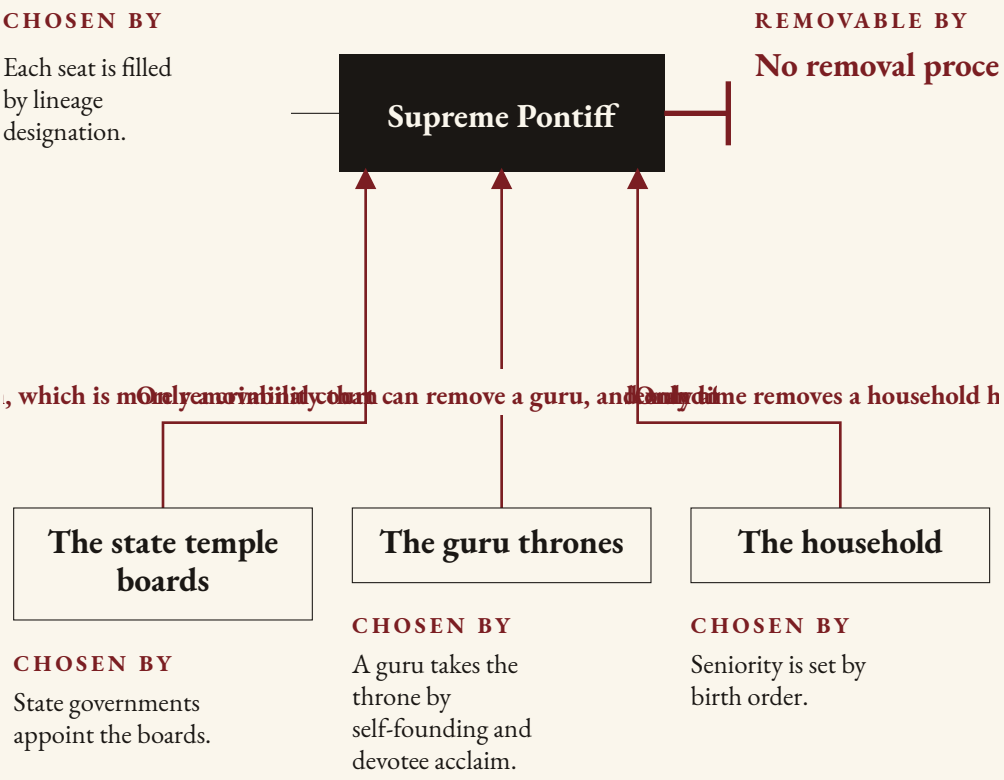
Authority

- Authority is radically decentralized. It sits with brahmin (priestly-caste) priesthoods, temple trusts, monastic orders (mathas), gurus and godmen, caste councils and family patriarchy.
- The absence of central authority means control is local and deniable — the guru, the panchayat (village or caste council), the family — while the tradition as a whole disclaims responsibility. PATTERN OBSERVED

The top of the chain

> No apex, by design — which is offered as a defense and reads, on inspection, as the finding.

WHERE THE ARROWS END



Each arrow points to whoever can remove the office below it. From the table that follows.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
The Shankaracharya seats	The four historic thrones carry immense prestige and no command, and no office speaks for the tradition. Occupancy of the Jyotir Math seat has been disputed in court since 2020, and in October 2022 the Supreme Court stayed one claimant's installation [32].	Each seat is filled by lineage designation.	No removal procedure is recorded.

The state temple boards	Major temple treasuries — Tirupati among them — are administered by government-appointed boards under state endowment acts: politicians appointing the managers of the gods' money	State governments appoint the boards.	State governments can remove them, at the next election, which is more removability than most chairs in this codex and worth saying plainly.
The guru thrones	Individual empires with nothing above the founder. The rape convictions of Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and Asaram Bapu came from criminal courts — because no religious authority exists that could have acted	A guru takes the throne by self-founding and devotee acclaim.	Only a criminal court can remove a guru, and only after the harm.
The household	The senior generation, enforcing marriage, caste, and ritual compliance	Seniority is set by birth order.	Only time removes a household head.

> **THE TELL**
>
> When a guru harms, there is no chair above him to appeal to. The first authority able to act is a judge — and by then the question is sentencing, not prevention.

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
State temple endowment departments	These are government administrations.	Their executive officers are appointed by the state.	They administer India's wealthiest temples and their revenues.	Your offering is budgeted by a political administration.	**OFFICIAL** **POLICY** · state endowment acts

Tirupati's governing board (TTD)	The trust is a temple trust.	Its board is appointed by the state government.	It holds assets in the billions, gold reserves, and tiered darshan (the act of seeing a deity) pricing.	The pricing decides what a better view of the deity costs you.	**FINANCIAL RECORD**
Hereditary priesthoods	This is a ritual monopoly.	The holders are priestly families, by birth.	They hold the exclusive right to perform the rites of your birth, marriage and death.	Every life passage is priced by inheritance.	**ACADEMIC SOURCE**
Convicted godmen and their organizations	The type is individual and adjudicated.	Leaders of major movements have been publicly convicted of rape; murder convictions in two cases were overturned on appeal (2024, 2026).	They hold corporate-scale operations with political protection and bloc-vote leverage.	They are proof that devotion at scale defeats scrutiny until a court intervenes.	**COURT RECORD** · Indian court judgments
Guru-branded consumer conglomerates	These are commercial businesses.	The holders are founder-gurus and their trusts.	They hold food, medicine, cosmetics and media businesses, sold on devotional authority.	They supply what is in your kitchen cupboard and your medicine cabinet.	**FINANCIAL RECORD** · corporate filings

Religious-nationalist political organizations	These are political organizations.	The holders are organizational leaderships.	They hold religious identity converted into electoral majority and a definition of national belonging.	Their definition of belonging bears on whether your neighbor counts as a citizen.	ACADEMIC SOURCE / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Caste councils (khap and jati panchayats)	This is informal enforcement.	The holders are local elders.	They hold a marriage veto and the power of ostracism, and in documented cases violence, with no legal standing.	They decide whom your daughter may marry.	GOVERNMENT REPORT · honor-killing prosecutions

Sources for this section: 1 4 10 11 32

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

No one speaks for Hinduism. The four Shankaracharya seats carry enormous prestige and no command, and the page treats that decentralization as genuinely freeing. It also says decentralization can be "a deniability structure": when nobody is in charge, nobody takes responsibility for what doctrine sanctified. The unanswered question is exactly that. If a practice in your family harms someone, who in your tradition could you ask to stop it, and who would take responsibility if it didn't?

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	THE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION
India — caste	The Constitution abolished untouchability (Article 17, 1950) [8].	Dowry deaths still ran to 6,450 in 2022 [9].
India — temples	Many large temples are run by state-appointed boards; Tirupati's trust published a white paper in 2022 [10]	Sabarimala's ban on women of menstruating age was struck down in 2018; a nine-judge bench reserved judgment on 14 May 2026, and the verdict is expected in October 2026 [5] [26]
India — superstition	Maharashtra's anti-superstition ordinance came four days after Narendra Dabholkar's murder in 2013 [18]	Two men were convicted of his murder in 2024; in August 2026 the High Court suspended one's life sentence and granted bail [18] [19]
United States — labour	Federal forced-labour law is the legal basis of the claims [6] [7].	A 2021 lawsuit said the BAPS temple in New Jersey was built with forced labour; federal prosecutors closed their investigation without charges in 2025, and the civil case continues [6] [7]

United States — caste	Seattle banned caste discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation in 2023, the first US city to do so [16] [28]	California's governor vetoed a statewide ban as "unnecessary" in October 2023 [15]

Who can compel an answer

Three routes can compel an answer: state endowment departments and the Right to Information (RTI) process for government-administered temple boards; the criminal courts, which are the only authority that has ever stopped a guru; and the ordinary electoral accountability of the politicians who appoint the boards.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Much of this page is Indian constitutional law. Article 17 abolished untouchability in 1950, yet dowry deaths still numbered 6,450 in 2022. The Supreme Court struck down Sabarimala's exclusion of women of menstruating age in 2018. If you live in the US, Seattle banned caste discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation in 2023, and California's governor vetoed a statewide ban. If you are a manager in a company with South Asian staff, did you know caste discrimination can happen at work, and that in most places no law names it?

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

- Money comes from temple economies. Tirupati, one of India's richest temples, recorded a net worth of ₹2.26 lakh crore in its own 2022 white paper [10]; many major temples are administered by state governments — governments literally managing and drawing on temple wealth.

  FINANCIAL RECORD / OFFICIAL POLICY · state temple endowment acts

- Guru organizations draw on donation empires, ashram real estate, branded products and diaspora funding. Documented collapses reveal internal economies of total control: Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh was convicted of rape in 2017; his two murder convictions were overturned on appeal in 2024 and 2026, the latter now before the Supreme Court. Asaram's life sentence for raping a minor was upheld in 2026. **COURT RECORD**

- Money also comes from ritual fees, pilgrimage economies and caste-linked ritual monopolies.

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Temple donations, hundi (donation-box) collections and gold offerings	The stated purpose is devotion and temple upkeep.	The temples hold billions in assets, and state governments administer and draw on major temple funds.	Temple trusts, state endowment departments and priestly establishments benefit. FINANCIAL RECORD
Ritual fees and priestly services	The stated purpose is life-cycle rites.	Hereditary monopoly pricing controls birth, marriage and death rites.	Priestly families benefit.
Guru dakshina (gifts to the teacher), ashram donations and branded products	The stated purpose is to support the guru's mission.	Donation empires operate with no audit, and convicted godmen ran corporate-scale operations.	Gurus, their families and organizational insiders benefit. COURT RECORD
Pilgrimage economies (Tirupati, the Kumbh Mela festival, the Char Dham pilgrimage circuit)	The stated purpose is sacred travel.	Access to darshan is priced in tiers, so pilgrims literally pay for a better view of God.	Trusts, states and tour operators benefit.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS

Temple donations, hundi (donation-box) collections and gold offerings	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is devotion and temple upkeep. **HOW IT CONTROLS** The temples hold billions in assets, and state governments administer and draw on major temple funds.	→	Temple trusts, state endowment departments and priestly establishments benefit.
Ritual fees and priestly services	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is life-cycle rites. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Hereditary monopoly pricing controls birth, marriage and death rites.	→	Priestly families benefit.
Guru dakshina (gifts to the teacher), ashram donations and branded products	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is to support the guru's mission. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Donation empires operate with no audit, and convicted godmen ran corporate-scale operations.	→	Gurus, their families and organizational insiders benefit.
Pilgrimage economies (Tirupati, the Kumbh Mela festival, the Char Dham pilgrimage circuit)	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is sacred travel. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Access to darshan is priced in tiers, so pilgrims literally pay for a better view of God.	→	Trusts, states and tour operators 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

TEMPLE OFFERING TO STATE REVENUE

Source. The money comes from devotional offerings, hundi and gold.

Path. Temple trust → State endowment department → State general revenue and administration

Disclosed. Headline asset figures are disclosed.

Hidden. Line-item allocation and diversion stay hidden.

DERA AND ASHRAM ECONOMY

Source. The money comes from devotee giving and unpaid service.

Path. Living guru's organization → Family-held entities → Political protection

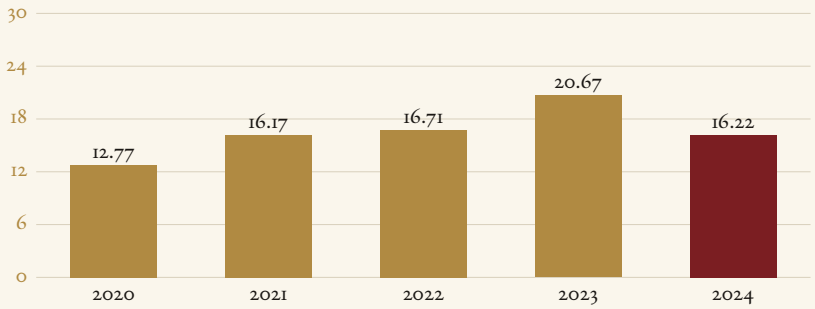
Disclosed. Charitable activity is disclosed.

Hidden. Asset ownership and personal use stay hidden.

Sources for this section: 1 4 10 27

Money in numbers

BAPS SWAMINARAYAN SANSTHA (UK): INCOME



£ million, years to 31 December — This is the UK charity behind the Neasden temple. Almost all of its income is donations. Its accounts are public because charity law requires it. [14]

- **Tirupati:** the temple trust's own 2022 white paper records a net worth of ₹2.26 lakh crore (a lakh crore is one trillion rupees) and 10.25 tonnes of gold on deposit [10] (Business Today's report of the same white paper gives 10.3 tonnes [27]).
- **BAPS UK, 2024:** donations were £15.39m of £16.22m income, and £15.83m was spent [14].
- **Guru organizations** publish little; their finances surface through courts [14].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

India's richest temples hold wealth that is hard to picture. Tirupati's own 2022 white paper declared a net worth of ₹2.26 lakh crore and 10.25 tonnes of gold on deposit. Many large temples are run by state-appointed boards, which means governments manage, and draw on, temple wealth. When you make an offering, do you know whether a state board or a private trust receives it, and whether you can read its accounts?

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?

CASTE AS BIRTH-ASSIGNED HIERARCHY

Origin. It emerged in the Vedic and post-Vedic period and was codified textually in Dharmashastra literature, including the Manusmriti (2nd–3rd century CE, per [12]).

ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It was an occupational and ritual division of labor in an agrarian society, sanctified to make it permanent and to make its permanence feel cosmic rather than political.

Why that reason expired. Untouchability was abolished by India's constitution in 1950. Yet inter-caste marriage still triggers ostracism and documented killings, and separate temples and wells persist. A rule with no legal standing survives on social enforcement alone. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Who benefits now. Upper-caste families retaining ritual monopolies, land, and marriage networks — and every political operation that mobilizes caste blocs. The cost falls on Dalits (the communities formerly called untouchable), in the tradition's oldest and largest harm.

KARMA APPLIED TO INHERITED DISADVANTAGE

Origin. Karma as ethical causation is ancient and philosophically serious; its application to justify caste position hardens in the classical period. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It made an otherwise indefensible social order intelligible: your position is earned, therefore just, therefore not to be resisted.

Why that reason expired. This is the most efficient compliance mechanism ever devised, and it is applied to children. A child taught that her family's poverty is deserved learns not to ask who arranged it.

Who benefits now. Everyone above a child in the arrangement benefits, and no one else does. Bhakti saints attacked this from within the tradition centuries ago — the internal critique is older than the colonial one.

GURU SURRENDER (GURU-BHAKTI ABSOLUTISM)

Origin. It began as ancient teacher-disciple transmission, intensified in medieval sampradayas and industrialized by 20th-century global guru organizations. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. Oral transmission of difficult knowledge required trust and long apprenticeship in a village-scale relationship with community visibility.

Why that reason expired. Scaled to organizations with mass followings, real estate empires, and political protection, the same surrender means no follower has standing to question anything. Multiple godmen have been convicted of rape while devotees insisted it was impossible. COURT RECORD

Who benefits now. Gurus and their families benefit, running corporate-scale operations with donation income, no audit, and vote banks that politicians court.

TEMPLE WEALTH UNDER STATE ADMINISTRATION

Origin. State endowment acts, from the colonial era and after independence, placed major temples under government departments. OFFICIAL POLICY

What it was for. It was framed as protecting temple assets from mismanagement by hereditary trustees, a real problem at the time.

Why that reason expired. The result is that governments now administer and draw on billions in devotional offerings, while hereditary priesthoods retain ritual monopolies. Devotees fund both and audit neither.

Who benefits now. State endowment departments, temple trusts and priestly families benefit. Your offering enters an account you cannot inspect.

Sources for this section: 1 4 8 12

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

- Caste-linked ritual knowledge was historically restricted by birth — Sanskrit study and Vedic recitation denied to lower castes and women, an information monopoly enforced for centuries. ACADEMIC SOURCE
- In guru movements, criticism of the guru is framed as spiritual disqualification; devotees who report abuse are labeled deluded or motivated by ego. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY / COURT RECORD
- Contemporary nationalist pressure on textbooks, films, scholars, and journalists narrows public discussion of religious history. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Children

- Children pass through samskaras (life-cycle rites) from birth, upper-caste boys receive the thread ceremony (upanayana), and caste identity is assigned at birth and legally recorded.
- Karma teaching applied to children explains inherited disadvantage as deserved — the single most efficient mechanism for producing acceptance of hierarchy. PATTERN OBSERVED
- Gurukula (residential teacher-led) and ashram schooling has produced documented abuse cases with weak oversight. COURT RECORD

- Child marriage persists in some regions despite legal prohibition, defended in traditional framing. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Bodies

- Menstrual exclusion from temples and kitchens is widespread custom; the Sabarimala litigation made it a constitutional question. COURT RECORD · Indian Supreme Court 2018
- Dowry is illegal and pervasive; dowry-related deaths are recorded in the thousands annually by India's own crime bureau. GOVERNMENT REPORT
- Widows face stigma and, in some communities, restrictions on remarriage, and the historical practice of sati (the burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre) was its extreme form. ACADEMIC SOURCE
- Guru sexual abuse of female devotees is documented in multiple criminal convictions. COURT RECORD
- Devadasi dedication (the dedication of girls to temple service) persists illegally in some areas. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Sources for this section: 5 9

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?

Contemporary nationalist pressure on textbooks, films, scholars, and journalists narrows public discussion of religious history.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

6	24
TAUGHT	CULTURAL

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 **CULTURAL**	18 Silent Treatment / Stonewalling **CULTURAL**	19 Manufactured Consent **CULTURAL**
	20 Trauma Bonding **CULTURAL**	21 Learned Helplessness **CULTURAL**	22 Benevolent Control **CULTURAL**	23 Infantilization **CULTURAL**
	24 Identity Erosion **CULTURAL**	25 Spiritual Bypassing **TAUGHT**	26 Financial Control **CULTURAL**	
STAGE 7 Discard	27 Manufactured Crisis **CULTURAL**	28 Discard **CULTURAL**		
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 tradition offers yoga, meditation, universal acceptance, the claim that all paths are valid, and cosmic purpose. The soft face arrives first — often with a guru who says he has been waiting for you.

What it asks of you: You were shown universalism. The caste rules and the guru's authority came later. Ask about the sequence.

1 · Love Bombing

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

How it shows here

- Seekers are drawn by yoga, meditation, temples, music, gurus, festivals, vegetarian meals, Sanskrit chants, incense, and the promise that all paths are valid.
- Western converts may first encounter the soft face: universal consciousness, karma, devotion, peace, nonviolence, sacred sound.
- The harder structures often appear later: guru obedience, caste apologetics, ritual payments, purity rules, gender expectations, family pressure, or the claim that suffering is deserved from past-life karma.

The strongest defense. Hinduism is diverse, decentralized, and not institutionally coercive in one single way.

The counter. Diversity can become plausible deniability. When the soft universalist pitch attracts people but the local institution later demands obedience, money, caste deference, or guru loyalty, decentralization becomes a shield: no one is responsible, but everyone is expected to comply.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Temple, ashram, and guru welcome are entirely local; there is no body that could standardize or be held to it.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- Temples and ashrams may provide food, festivals, spiritual instruction, community support, ritual services, yoga, meditation, and guru guidance.
- A guru or organization may offer belonging, healing, mantra initiation, vegetarian meals, retreats, and a sense of cosmic purpose.
- The obligation can appear later through donations, seva (unpaid service), guru dakshina, ritual fees, family pressure, caste expectations, purity rules, or loyalty to the lineage.
- In some settings, social aid is tied to birth community, caste networks, temple status, or family honor, making independence costly.

The strongest defense. Hindu traditions are diverse, decentralized, and often centered on service, hospitality, and devotion.

The counter. Decentralization does not prevent control. It can hide it. When no single institution is responsible, each local authority can say, "This is just tradition." If food, ritual, healing, or guru access creates debt to a hierarchy, the generosity is still weaponized — even without a central headquarters.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The food, festivals, instruction and healing offered by temples and gurus, and the obligations that follow them, are local and customary; no body sets or audits them.

Stage 2 · Hook

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

The promises are moksha (release from the cycle of rebirth), better rebirth, the guru's grace and the merit of this pilgrimage, with no timeline, no verification, and karmic accounting that explains any disappointment. Retrieval comes through family illness, festivals and a mother's plea.

What it asks of you: A system that can explain every failure as karmic debt can never be shown to have failed. Notice that this is a design property, not a discovery.

3 · Future Faking

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

How it shows here

- Hindu traditions can future-fake through moksha, better rebirth, karmic progress, guru blessing, cosmic order, and liberation from the cycle of birth and death.
- Present suffering can be explained as past-life karma. Future improvement is promised through devotion, ritual, purity, duty, caste obligation, seva, mantra, temple offerings, or guru obedience.

- The promise is elastic: if liberation does not happen now, perhaps later; if not this life, another life; if not understood, it is beyond ordinary consciousness.
- Caste-based systems can weaponize future hope brutally: accept your present station as karmic result, perform your duty, and future births may improve.
- Guru-centered movements may promise awakening, kundalini transformation (a claimed awakening of spiritual energy), divine realization, or karmic cleansing if the student surrenders long enough.

The strongest defense. Karma and reincarnation teach moral responsibility across lifetimes, not manipulation.

The counter. A doctrine becomes future faking when it explains away present injustice and delays justice into invisible lifetimes. If the poor, oppressed, abused, lower-status, or exploited are told their suffering is karmic and their future depends on obedience now, then reincarnation becomes a system for postponing revolt.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Moksha, rebirth, and guru grace are taught doctrine; karmic accounting makes any disappointment self-explaining.

4 · Hoovering

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

How it shows here

- A person leaving Hindu practice, family tradition, caste expectation, or guru-centered devotion may be told they are abandoning dharma, dishonoring parents, rejecting ancestors, or creating bad karma.
- Family rituals, weddings, funerals, festivals, temple visits, and rites for the dead may be used to pull them back into participation.
- If they reject caste expectations, marriage rules, purity rules, or guru authority, the response may be: "This is not religion; this is our culture."
- A disciple leaving a guru may be told they are losing a rare spiritual opportunity, damaging their karma, or severing a sacred bond.
- Parents may use emotional debt: "We raised you in this tradition. How can you humiliate us?"

The strongest defense. Hindu practice is often family and culture, not coercive institutional membership.

The counter. Culture can hoover more effectively than an institution because it does not look optional. If saying no to a ritual means betraying family, ancestors, marriage prospects, caste expectations, or cosmic duty, then the pull is coercive even without a central church.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT The warning that leaving means abandoning dharma or creating bad karma is taught; the pull-back itself is applied through family rites and family pressure, not through any institutional procedure.

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.

The faults named are insufficient devotion, insufficient purity and insufficient surrender. Suffering is reframed as karmic debt you have not yet worked off.

What it asks of you: When your pain is explained as deserved, no one has to fix anything.

5 · Devaluation

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

How it shows here

- Hindu institutional systems can devalue through karma, caste, purity, guru hierarchy, family duty, and cosmic explanations for suffering.
- Caste is the starkest institutional example: a person can be "born into a caste they can never leave," with the condition explained as cosmic justice.
- Past-life karma can make present suffering feel deserved. Poverty, illness, social status, abuse, or exclusion can be interpreted as the result of prior actions.
- Guru-centered systems may teach that the disciple's ego, ignorance, or karmic burden prevents them from seeing truth without surrender.
- Women, lower-caste people, widows, queer people, and dissenters can be pressured through purity codes, family honor, and dharma language.

The strongest defense. Hinduism is diverse and cannot be reduced to caste or guru abuse.

The counter. Diversity does not absolve the systems that do operate this way. When karma is used to explain inequality instead of confronting it, and when dharma is used to keep people in assigned roles, cosmic language becomes a machine for making oppression feel deserved.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT Karma applied to present circumstance is taught continuously and is contested by the tradition's own bhakti and anti-caste currents.

6 · Gaslighting

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

How it shows here

- A person questions caste, purity rules, gender roles, family pressure, or guru authority, and is told they do not understand dharma.
- Someone suffering under social hierarchy may be told their situation reflects karma from past lives.
- A disciple says the guru harmed them, and the response becomes, “The guru is burning your ego,” “You are not ready,” or “This is your karma.”
- A woman resists family or marriage expectations and is told she is dishonoring tradition.

The strongest defense. Hinduism is diverse, and karma/dharma are complex concepts often misunderstood.

The counter. Complexity becomes gaslighting when it is used to protect hierarchy. If every injustice is explained as karma and every demand is defended as dharma, then cosmic language is being used to make human control look eternal.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT Telling a questioner that they do not understand dharma, or that the harm is their karma, uses teachings that are taught continuously; the tradition's own bhakti and anti-caste currents contest that use.

7 · Double Bind

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

How it shows here

- Seekers are told all paths lead to the One — but leaving this guru's path shows their karma is not ripe. All paths are valid; departure from ours is blindness.
- Karma explains suffering as self-created — so protesting mistreatment is protesting one's own past actions. Accept it and remain in bondage; resist it and add more karma.
- The tradition celebrates fierce debate among schools, yet the household or temple authority treats a daughter's or student's disagreement as disrespect to elders — a category with no permitted form.

The strongest defense. Hinduism has no central authority; no one can bind anyone. It is the most pluralistic tradition on earth.

The counter. Pluralism among institutions does not guarantee freedom within one. The absence of a pope does not mean the absence of a patriarch, a guru, or a panchayat — it means the bind is local, deniable, and everywhere.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT The bind rests on two teachings held together, that all paths lead to the One and that suffering is self-created karma; both are taught, and household, guru or temple authority applies the bind locally.

Stage 4 · Confuse

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

Question a guru and it is your ego, your bad karma, your Western contamination. Devotees who reported abuse were called deluded — until courts convicted.

What it asks of you: A framework where doubt is proof of your defect is not spiritual depth. It is a closed circuit.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Darshan of a guru or deity is structured scarcity: long queues, brief contact, occasional overwhelming moments — and the rarity is the proof of potency, funding return trips and rising offerings.
- A guru's attention alternates grace and withdrawal; seniors explain that his ignoring you is itself a teaching. Whatever the guru does is defined as a reward of the path.
- Ritual investment pays irregularly — the puja before the exam that went well becomes family legend; the ten that changed nothing are forgotten. Memory curates the wins; the priest collects on the curation.

The strongest defense. Grace (kripa) by nature cannot be scheduled; the devotee's longing itself purifies.

The counter. Unschedulable grace is theology. A human institution deliberately rationing access, monetizing queues, and teaching that withdrawal is instruction has scheduled the unschedulable — and kept the concession stand.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Scarce darshan and a guru's alternation of attention and withdrawal are local practice; no body sets or audits how access is rationed.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

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

How it shows here

- A person fulfills family rituals, but then must also obey caste expectations, marriage expectations, astrological guidance, purity rules, temple obligations, and parental honor.
- A disciple serves a guru. Then service becomes donation, surrender, secrecy, celibacy or sexual compliance, labor, recruitment, and accepting humiliation as ego-burning.
- Someone challenges caste or gender hierarchy. First they are told to understand dharma. When they study and still object, they are told they lack humility, tradition, karma-awareness, or cultural understanding.

The strongest defense. Hindu traditions are diverse, layered, and not reducible to one rule.

The counter. Diversity becomes goalpost-moving when every challenge is redirected into another layer of tradition no one is allowed to finish questioning. Complexity can clarify. It can also bury accountability.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The shifting demands on a family member or disciple come from parents, caste networks and individual gurus, not from a written standard, so the entry rests on custom.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

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

How it shows here

- Caste may be described as spiritual order, social custom, colonial distortion, family tradition, or irrelevant ideal depending on criticism.
- Guru authority can be framed as guidance, divine embodiment, lineage transmission, parental care, or optional devotion depending on the moment.
- Karma is used as cosmic justice when explaining suffering, but softened into metaphor when challenged.

The strongest defense. Hindu concepts are subtle, diverse, and often misread by outsiders.

The counter. Subtlety becomes strategic ambiguity when harmful practices become too complex to criticize but simple enough to enforce. If caste, karma, and guru power are clear when controlling people and vague when challenged, the fog is strategic.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The shifting descriptions of caste and guru authority are supplied by families and gurus as each criticism arrives; no body defines them, so the entry rests on how they are used.

11 · Projection

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

How it shows here

- Caste-based systems may accuse lower-status people of impurity while protecting the moral impurity of inherited hierarchy.
- Families may accuse children of abandoning dharma for resisting arranged expectations, caste boundaries, or ritual control.
- Guru-centered groups accuse disciples of ego when they question the guru's money, sex, secrecy, or power.
- Karma may be used to blame suffering people for their condition, projecting social injustice onto a supposed past-life debt.

The strongest defense. Hinduism is diverse, and karma, dharma, caste, and guru traditions are complex.

The counter. Complexity does not erase reversal. When hierarchy calls the oppressed impure, gurus call accountability ego, and suffering is blamed on karma, the system is projecting its own disorder onto those beneath it.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Accusing critics and disciples of impurity, ego or abandoning dharma is a customary reply used by families, caste networks and gurus; no body directs it.

12 · DARVO

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

How it shows here

- A person challenges caste discrimination, guru abuse, dowry pressure, gender control, family coercion, or purity rules. The response may deny that the problem is religious and call it culture, misunderstanding, or isolated misuse.
- Then the critic is attacked as anti-Hindu, Westernized, disrespectful, colonized, or ignorant of dharma.
- Guru-centered groups may call abuse accusations "ego," "karma," "testing," or attacks on a realized master.
- Families may frame themselves as dishonored victims when a child refuses arranged expectations or caste boundaries.
- The person harmed by hierarchy becomes the offender for naming hierarchy.

The strongest defense. Hinduism is diverse and often misrepresented by outsiders.

The counter. Misrepresentation exists, but diversity cannot be used as an escape hatch for abuse. If every internal critique is dismissed as anti-Hindu or Western corruption, then identity has replaced accountability.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Calling a guru's abuse accusation "ego" or "testing", and labeling critics anti-Hindu or Westernized, is a customary reply used by families, communities and guru circles; no body directs it. The godmen's rape convictions are on the court record (section 19), but that record does not itself show the reply.

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

- Family ritual, caste expectations, purity rules, astrology, temple obligations, arranged marriage norms, and elder authority can become normal because they are embedded in family life.
- Caste hierarchy may be softened through language of tradition, karma, duty, or social order until inherited inequality feels natural.
- Guru-centered groups normalize surrender step by step: darshan, seva, donations, mantra, obedience, secrecy, humiliation, and calling discomfort ego-burning.
- Women may be desensitized to family honor, marriage pressure, ritual purity, and obedience framed as dharma.

The strongest defense. Hindu life is diverse, family-based, and deeply rooted in tradition.

The counter. Tradition becomes desensitization when repetition makes hierarchy feel cosmic. If a person stops noticing that caste, gender, guru power, or family control is human-made, the system has successfully naturalized domination.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Normalization runs through family life, elder authority and guru practice from childhood; it rests on custom, not on any written rule.

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.

Caste and family determine marriage, employment, and social standing. In guru movements, community, housing, savings and identity all sit inside the organization.

What it asks of you: How much of your life is held by people who would withdraw it if you married the wrong person?

14 · Isolation

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

How it shows here

- Hindu isolation may operate through family, caste, marriage rules, temple networks, guru communities, ritual obligations, purity boundaries, and suspicion of outsiders who "do not understand dharma."
- Caste can isolate by controlling who one eats with, marries, worships with, touches, serves, or belongs among.
- Family systems may isolate dissenters by tying religion to honor: refusing rituals, questioning caste, rejecting arranged marriage, or leaving a guru becomes betrayal of parents and ancestors.
- Guru-centered groups can isolate disciples from family, critics, ordinary careers, romantic autonomy, and outside moral reference points.
- Karma and dharma language can keep people inside harmful arrangements by making their assigned place feel cosmic rather than social.

The strongest defense. Hinduism is diverse and family-based, not a single centralized system of control.

The counter. Decentralized isolation is still isolation. If family, caste, guru, priest, ritual, astrology, and community reputation all restrict a person's movement, the lack of a central institution does not make the pressure harmless.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Caste endogamy and guru exclusivity are enforced by families and communities; untouchability has been unconstitutional since 1950.

15 · Triangulation

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

How it shows here

- Hindu triangulation can run through parents, caste networks, gurus, astrologers, priests, ancestors, family honor, dharma, karma, and marriage arrangements.
- A person resisting family expectations may be told, "Your parents know your dharma," "The astrologer warned against this match," "The priest said this ritual is necessary."
- Caste triangulates by turning marriage and social life into a networked enforcement system: family, community, relatives, temple, and reputation all converge on the person's choice.
- Guru-centered movements triangulate through senior disciples: if one disciple questions abuse or money, others tell them the guru is testing their ego.
- Suffering can be triangulated through karma: the person's current pain is explained by past-life causes, making resistance seem spiritually ignorant.
- Ancestors and ritual obligations can be used to pull the person back into family-controlled religious practice.

The strongest defense. Hindu life is often family-based, ritual-based, and culturally diverse rather than centralized control.

The counter. Decentralized control is still control. If parents, caste, priest, astrologer, guru, ancestors, and karma all point toward the same submission, the lack of a single pope does not make the pressure free.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Priestly ritual mediation and guru surrender are traditional practice with no central body that could be held to them.

Stage 6 · Extract

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

Temple offerings in the billions are administered by state departments and priestly families. Darshan is sold in priced tiers, so devotees pay for a better view of God. Guru donation empires operate with no audit. Caste determines marriage, work and standing. Question a guru and it is your ego, your bad karma, your Western contamination.

What it asks of you: Ask for Tirupati's audited accounts. The response you get to the request will teach you more than the accounts would.

16 · Flying Monkeys

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

How it shows here

- A person resisting caste expectations, arranged marriage, guru authority, or ritual obligation may be pressured by parents, relatives, priests, astrologers, family friends, caste networks, and temple authorities.
- A disciple who questions a guru may be approached by senior disciples: "The guru is testing you," "Your ego is resisting," "You are creating bad karma."
- Family elders may recruit relatives to pressure a young adult into rituals, marriage choices, or obedience framed as dharma.
- Caste networks can act as flying monkeys by enforcing marriage, purity, status, and reputation beyond the immediate family.

The strongest defense. Hindu life is family-based, and elders guide younger people through tradition.

The counter. Guidance becomes FLYING MONKEY behavior when everyone around the person delivers the same message of submission. If parents, priest, astrologer, guru, caste network, and relatives all converge on obedience, the tradition has outsourced coercion to family.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Relatives, priests, senior disciples and caste networks press the same message on a dissenter; this is informal community enforcement, and no body directs it.

17 · Smear Campaign

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

How it shows here

- Critics of caste, guru abuse, gender control, or family coercion may be labeled anti-Hindu, Westernized, colonized, disrespectful, ignorant of dharma, or corrupted by modernity.
- A disciple exposing a guru may be smeared as ego-driven, ungrateful, karmically impure, or attacking a realized master.
- A child resisting arranged expectations may be framed as selfish, dishonoring parents, or destroying family reputation.
- Caste dissenters may be accused of attacking tradition rather than naming hierarchy.

The strongest defense. Hindu traditions are often misrepresented by outsiders.

The counter. Misrepresentation does not erase internal harm. If every critique is dismissed as anti-Hindu, then identity has become a shield against accountability.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Labeling critics anti-Hindu, Westernized or egoic is a customary reply used by families, communities and guru circles; no body directs it.

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

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

How it shows here

- A person challenges caste, guru abuse, dowry pressure, gender control, or family coercion and is told, “This is tradition,” “you do not understand dharma,” or “do not disrespect elders.”
- Family elders may refuse discussion and simply proceed with rituals, marriage plans, or expectations.
- Guru organizations may ignore complaints, offer vague statements, or claim the matter is spiritual and cannot be judged by outsiders.
- Questions about karma, caste, or hierarchy are pushed into complexity until the critic is exhausted.

The strongest defense. Hindu traditions are diverse and complex; outsiders often misunderstand.

The counter. Complexity becomes stonewalling when it prevents accountability. If the practice is clear enough to enforce but too complex to challenge, the ambiguity is not depth. It is obstruction.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Refusals to discuss ("this is tradition", "you do not understand dharma") come from family elders and guru organizations as informal practice; no body sets them.

19 · Manufactured Consent

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

How it shows here

- A young adult "chooses" an arranged marriage after family honor, caste expectations, astrology, elders, and community reputation narrow the field.
- A disciple "chooses" guru surrender after being taught that doubt is ego and obedience burns karma.
- Caste compliance may appear voluntary because everyone around the person treats hierarchy as natural, traditional, or karmic.
- Women may "choose" ritual roles, purity restrictions, or family sacrifice after being told it is dharma.

The strongest defense. Tradition, family guidance, and arranged structures do not automatically eliminate consent.

The counter. They do not automatically eliminate it. But consent is manufactured when refusal brings shame, exile, dishonor, or spiritual blame. If the family builds the maze and then says you chose the path, the choice is compromised.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Caste is birth-assigned and socially enforced; untouchability has been unconstitutional since 1950, which makes the persistence cultural rather than legal [8]. *(sourced)*

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- Family, caste, karma, guru authority, ritual purity, and dharma can create cycles of shame and relief.
- A person is told disobedience dishonors parents, disrupts karma, violates dharma, or brings shame; relief comes when they comply with ritual, marriage, caste, or guru expectations.
- Guru-centered movements may humiliate disciples as egoic, then offer blessing, darshan, mantra, and special attention.
- Suffering is explained as karma, then the institution offers a path to purify it.

The strongest defense. Hindu traditions offer duty, family guidance, and spiritual discipline.

The counter. Discipline becomes TRAUMA BONDING when obedience is the only way to relieve shame created by the system. If guru, family, caste, or karma first break your self-trust and then offer peace through surrender, attachment is being manufactured.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The cycle of shame and relief runs through family, caste, guru and ritual relationships, all informal; the entry rests on how those relationships operate, not on an institutional record.

21 · Learned Helplessness

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

How it shows here

- A person challenges caste, marriage expectations, guru authority, or family control and is told it is karma, dharma, tradition, or parental wisdom.
- Every objection is absorbed into another explanation.
- A disciple harmed by a guru is told the harm is ego-burning or karmic purification.
- Eventually the person stops resisting because resistance itself is interpreted as spiritual ignorance.

The strongest defense. Tradition and dharma guide people through complex life duties.

The counter. Dharma becomes LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when it makes every assigned role feel unavoidable. If the system can explain any suffering as karma and any refusal as ego, then action has been made meaningless.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Explaining every objection as karma, dharma or ego is done by families and gurus as habit; no body directs it, so the entry rests on custom.

22 · Benevolent Control

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

How it shows here

- Family control over marriage, ritual, caste, purity, gender roles, and duty may be framed as dharma and parental love.
- Guru authority may be presented as compassionate guidance beyond the disciple's ego.
- Caste or family restrictions may be justified as preserving order, tradition, and spiritual harmony.
- A woman or young person may be told obedience protects family honor and cosmic balance.

The strongest defense. Family and guru guidance can preserve tradition and help people fulfill dharma.

The counter. Dharma becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when it makes hierarchy feel loving. If the person cannot refuse family, caste, or guru authority without being accused of ego or dishonor, guidance has become a sacred leash.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Family control and guru authority framed as dharma and care are customary and applied by relatives and gurus; no body directs them. The Sabarimala case (section 19) shows a purity custom operating without doctrinal necessity [5], but it concerns one temple and does not describe family or guru control framed as love.

23 · Infantilization

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

How it shows here

- Adult children may be treated as incapable of choosing spouse, career, rituals, or family role without elders, caste networks, priests, astrologers, or gurus.
- Guru disciples may be told their ego prevents them from seeing truth.
- Women may be treated as vessels of family honor rather than autonomous adults.
- Caste and family systems may speak for the individual before the individual speaks.

The strongest defense. Family and guru guidance can help people make wise choices.

The counter. Guidance becomes INFANTILIZATION when adults cannot refuse it without shame. If elders, astrologers, caste, and gurus must approve adulthood, the person has been kept socially underage.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The treatment of adults as dependent on elders, astrologers, caste networks and gurus is customary; no body requires it.

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

- Identity may be shaped by caste, family, gender, karma, dharma, ritual role, marriage expectations, guru lineage, purity, and ancestral duty.
- The person may be told their social location is cosmic, not merely social.
- Guru-centered movements can replace the person's self with disciple identity: surrender, seva, mantra, obedience, lineage, and guru approval.
- Women may be absorbed into daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, ritual caretaker, or family honor roles.
- Personal suffering may be interpreted as karma, making protest feel like resistance to one's own cosmic identity.

The strongest defense. Hindu identity is diverse, layered, familial, and spiritually meaningful.

The counter. Layered identity becomes IDENTITY EROSION when the layers cannot be removed. If caste, family, guru, karma, and dharma define you before you speak, then identity is not unfolding. It is assignment.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The roles that replace an individual's identity (caste, family, gender, guru lineage) are conferred by custom and enforced by relatives and communities, not by any single body.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

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

How it shows here

- Suffering is bypassed through karma: "This is the result of past actions."
- Social hierarchy is bypassed through dharma, tradition, or cosmic order.
- Guru abuse may be reframed as ego-burning, purification, or a test.
- Family coercion is bypassed as honoring parents or preserving dharma.
- Gender restrictions may be spiritualized as feminine duty or sacred family role.

The strongest defense. Karma and dharma give life moral meaning and responsibility.

The counter. Karma becomes SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when it explains injustice instead of confronting it. If suffering people are told their pain is spiritually deserved, cosmic language has become moral evasion.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Karmic explanation of inherited disadvantage, taught widely and disputed by the tradition's own bhakti and anti-caste currents.

26 · Financial Control

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

How it shows here

- Hindu financial control can appear through temple donations, ritual fees, priest payments, guru offerings, ashram donations, pilgrimage costs, wedding expenses, caste networks, and family-controlled finances.
- Guru movements may ask for seva, dakshina, retreat fees, donations, land, labor, or lifetime service.
- Families may use inheritance, wedding funding, housing, or business networks to enforce marriage, caste, gender, or ritual compliance.
- Ritual obligation can become financially open-ended: another puja, another offering, another astrologer, another ceremony.

The strongest defense. Ritual giving, guru offerings, and family support are traditional forms of devotion and duty.

The counter. Duty becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when money secures obedience. If refusing a ritual, guru, caste expectation, or marriage plan risks family support or spiritual guilt, financial dependence has been sanctified.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Ritual fees, guru offerings, pilgrimage costs and family finances are set by custom and by individual priests, gurus and families. State endowment acts do place major temple funds under government administration (section 8), but that is administration, not a rule that secures obedience, and hereditary ritual monopolies are customary rather than codified.

Stage 7 · Discard

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

Inter-caste or inter-faith marriage brings ostracism and, in documented cases, violence. In guru movements the cost is the loss of community, savings and years of unpaid service, and the departing member is labeled a traitor to the lineage.

What it asks of you: The penalty is administered by relatives, which is exactly why no institution has to admit it exists.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Families may manufacture crisis around marriage, caste, astrology, ritual neglect, family honor, gender roles, or guru criticism.
- A person rejecting an arranged match may trigger panic: dishonor, bad karma, wrong stars, social shame, ancestral displeasure.

- Guru groups may frame criticism as a dangerous attack on the master, lineage, or student's spiritual progress.
- Ritual failures may be interpreted as causes of sickness, bad luck, or family conflict.

The strongest defense. Family, ritual, astrology, and guru traditions can be deeply meaningful.

The counter. Meaning becomes MANUFACTURED CRISIS when disagreement is turned into cosmic emergency. If refusal of a marriage, ritual, or guru produces panic about karma, ancestors, and honor, fear is being used to close exits.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The panic raised over a refused marriage, a neglected ritual or a criticized guru comes from families and guru circles; no body directs it.

28 · Discard

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

How it shows here

- A person who rejects caste expectations, arranged marriage, ritual duty, or guru authority may be treated as dishonoring family or abandoning dharma.
- A disciple who exposes guru abuse may be exiled as egoic, karmically impure, or ungrateful.

- Family support can vanish when the person refuses the path laid out for them.
- Social discard may happen through marriage networks, inheritance pressure, ritual exclusion, or family shame.

The strongest defense. Family and tradition create obligations that individuals cannot ignore without consequence.

The counter. Obligation becomes DISCARD when love is withdrawn for refusing assigned identity. If family belonging depends on fulfilling caste, ritual, marriage, or guru expectations, the person is not loved as self. They are retained as function.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Ostracism for inter-caste and inter-faith marriage is family and panchayat enforced; honor killings are prosecuted as crimes, and the Supreme Court has ordered states to act against them [31]. *(sourced)*

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 eternal dharma.

There is no roll to be struck from, which is why nothing appears to happen — while your family quietly rearranges itself around your absence. And the authority is dharma: eternal, impersonal, and not ours to change.

What it asks of you: Something eternal does not need a state endowment department to administer its bank accounts.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A child who rejects arranged expectations may be replaced emotionally by a sibling or cousin who obeys.
- A disciple who leaves a guru is replaced by another who serves, donates, and praises.

- A family may seek another marriage alliance that restores caste, astrology, status, or honor.
- Guru movements use new devotees to bury old allegations.

The strongest defense. Families and lineages continue when individuals choose differently.

The counter. Continuity becomes REPLACEMENT when the person is treated as interchangeable with whoever restores honor. If obedience can replace relationship, the system values compliance over kinship.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Replacing a departed child or disciple with an obedient sibling, another marriage alliance or a new devotee happens inside families and guru organizations; no body directs it.

30 · Plausible Deniability

The institution is never responsible, because the authority is attributed to eternal dharma, which is not available for cross-examination.

How it shows here

- Families may say marriage choices are voluntary, while caste, astrology, parental honor, inheritance, and community reputation make refusal devastating.
- Guru organizations deny coercion by saying disciples freely surrender, while doubt is labeled ego and obedience is praised as spiritual maturity.
- Caste pressure may be dismissed as social custom, not religion, while religious concepts of karma, purity, and dharma uphold it.

- Gender roles are framed as family harmony, sacred femininity, or dharma rather than control.
- Ritual fees and offerings may be “optional,” but refusal is treated as disrespect or spiritual negligence.

The strongest defense. Hinduism is diverse; no single institution controls it. Family guidance is not coercion. Karma and dharma are misunderstood by critics.

The counter. Diversity becomes PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY when no one is accountable for local domination. Family guidance is coercion when refusal triggers shame, exile, financial threat, or marriage consequences. Complexity does not excuse using cosmic language to protect human hierarchy.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Authority attributed to eternal dharma, with radical decentralization functioning as the strongest deniability shield in the codex.

Sources for this section: 5 8 31

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

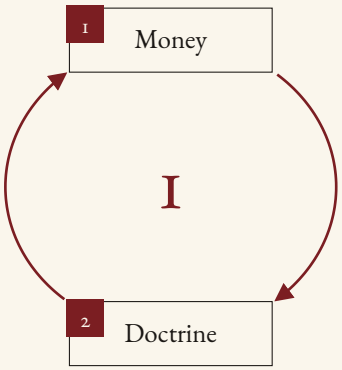
The loops

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



Ritual fees and offerings fund priesthoods and trusts that define which rites are required and who may perform them.

How it runs.

1. Devotees pay ritual fees and priestly fees, make temple offerings, and pay for priced access to darshan (section 9).
2. Hereditary priesthoods hold the exclusive right to perform the rites of birth, marriage and death, and temple trusts and state endowment departments administer the offerings (section 7).
3. Ritual obligation becomes open-ended: another puja, another offering, another ceremony (technique 26), and refusing an offering is treated as disrespect or spiritual negligence (technique 30).

4. Ritual failure is interpreted as the cause of sickness, bad luck or family conflict, which gives the next payment its urgency (technique 27).

5. The payments continue, the priestly families inherit the monopoly, and the next generation of families pays on the same terms (section 7).

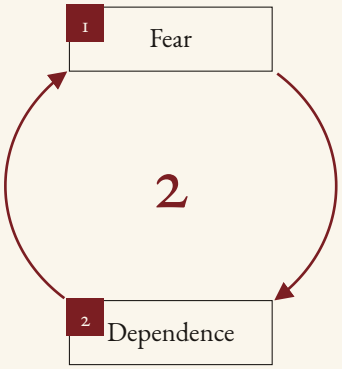
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 27 · Manufactured Crisis, 30 · Plausible Deniability, 3 · Future Faking.

Why it closes. The bodies that receive the payments also hold the right to perform the rites, and the page records no published audited accounts (section 14). A giver cannot see where the money goes, and cannot reach the rite without the priest.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever the money becomes visible. Tirupati's trust published a white paper in 2022 (section 9), and the Right to Information process reaches government-administered temple boards (section 8). A donor can ask for the accounts before giving (section 23, question 4). Whether the priestly monopoly on rites can change is a question for the priestly families. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Tirupati's own 2022 white paper records a net worth of ₹2.26 lakh crore and 10.25 tonnes of gold on deposit, while the same trust sells darshan in priced tiers (sections 7 and 9).

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



Karma installed in childhood makes disadvantage self-explaining; relief runs through ritual the family pays for.

How it runs.

1. Karma is taught to children, so that a child taught that her family's poverty is deserved learns not to ask who arranged it (sections 10 and 11).
2. Present suffering is explained as past-life karma, so disadvantage explains itself and the arrangement is not questioned (techniques 5 and 6).
3. Protest is then read as protest against one's own past actions: accepting the suffering is bondage, and resisting it adds more karma (technique 7).
4. Relief is offered through devotion, ritual, mantra and the guru's blessing, and the family pays for it (techniques 20 and 26).
5. Each act of relief confirms the karmic account, and the child grows up to teach it in turn (techniques 21 and 25, section 11).

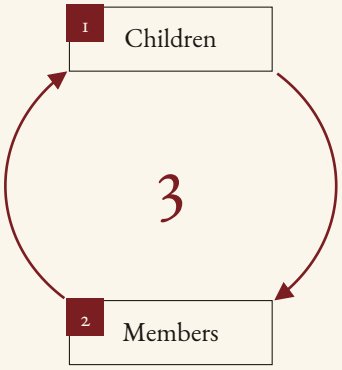
Techniques that feed it. 5 · Devaluation, 6 · Gaslighting, 7 · Double Bind, 20 · Trauma Bonding, 21 · Learned Helplessness, 25 · Spiritual Bypassing.

Why it closes. The teaching that explains the suffering also supplies the remedy. A person who doubts the explanation is told the doubt is ego or bad karma (the stage 4 summary in section 12), so the doubt itself becomes the next reason for fear.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. The page notes that the tradition's own bhakti and anti-caste currents contest the karmic explanation of inherited disadvantage (technique 5), and section 23 (question 2) asks what karma would say about the family that inherited the land. It weakens wherever a child hears that argument from someone inside the tradition. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 10 records that a child taught that her family's poverty is deserved learns not to ask who arranged it.

3 · Children to Members to Children



Caste is assigned at birth and legally recorded; ashram schooling and family expectation reproduce it.

How it runs.

1. Caste identity is assigned at birth and legally recorded (section 11).
2. Children pass through samskaras from birth, and upper-caste boys through the thread ceremony (section 11).
3. Karma teaching applied to children explains inherited disadvantage as deserved, and gurukula and ashram schooling has produced documented abuse cases with weak oversight (section 11, technique 13).
4. Family honor, caste expectations, astrology and community reputation narrow the field until an arranged marriage appears chosen (technique 19).
5. The married adults assign caste to their own children and enforce the same rules as the household (section 7).

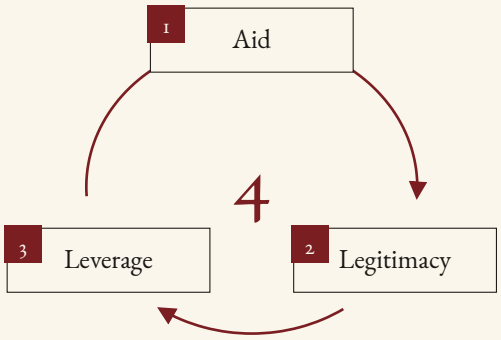
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 23 · Infantilization, 24 · Identity Erosion.

Why it closes. Each generation is placed in a caste before it can consent, formed by family and school before it can compare, and then enforces the same placement on the next. Nothing in the loop needs a decision to continue it.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where a family lets a marriage cross caste lines. That choice sits with the household, the one office in section 7 that only time removes. Section 20 names matrimonial platforms dropping caste fields as a change that would revise the page's strongest finding. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 2 shows Lakshmi hearing her mother-in-law's voice in her own when she questions her daughter about Saturday, and she hates it and does not take it back.

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



Temple wealth and religious-nationalist mobilization trade legitimacy for political protection, which secures the wealth.

How it runs.

1. Devotional offerings build large temple assets, and many major temples are administered by state governments that draw on the funds (sections 7 and 9).
2. Religious-nationalist organizations convert religious identity into an electoral majority and a definition of national belonging, and diaspora funding flows into these projects (section 16).
3. Godmen with mass followings receive political protection because their followers vote as blocs (section 16).
4. Convictions come late and only after the evidence becomes impossible to bury (sections 5 and 16).
5. The protected organizations keep their wealth and their followers, and the donations continue (section 9).

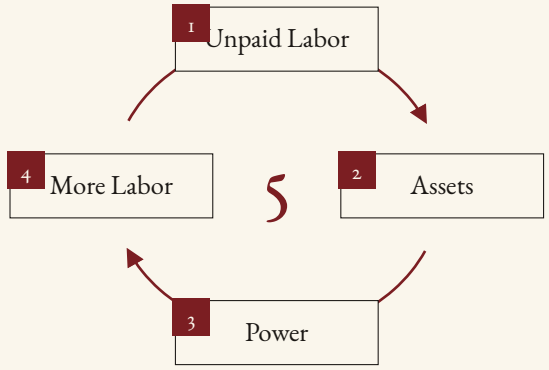
Techniques that feed it. 2 · Weaponized Generosity, 26 · Financial Control, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. Followers vote as blocs, which brings political protection (section 16), and the protected organizations keep their wealth (section 9). Each step depends on the one before it, and the last returns to the first.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the ordinary electoral accountability of the politicians who appoint temple boards is used, and where the criminal courts act, which section 8 names as the only authority that has ever stopped a guru. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 5 records that Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh's 2017 conviction triggered riots with dozens of deaths.

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



Devotee labor and donation build guru empires held by founders and their families.

How it runs.

1. Devotees give service, donations and labor to a guru's organization, and are asked for more over time: service becomes donation, surrender, secrecy and recruitment (techniques 9 and 26).
2. The organization holds ashram real estate, branded products and donation income, controlled by the founder and family (sections 7 and 9).
3. The finances are not audited, and nothing sits above the founder (sections 7 and 9).
4. Followers vote as blocs, which brings political protection (section 16).
5. New devotees arrive to serve, donate and praise, and are used to bury old allegations (technique 29).

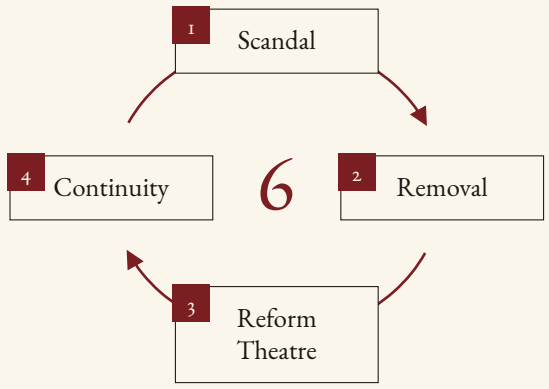
Techniques that feed it. 9 · Moving the Goalposts, 26 · Financial Control, 24 · Identity Erosion, 29 · Replacement.

Why it closes. The people who produce the assets hold no office that controls them. Value moves from labor to the founder and family (section 10), and new devotees replace those who leave (technique 29).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where finances are public: section 9 shows that a UK charity's accounts are open because charity law requires it, while guru organizations publish little and their finances surface through courts. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 19 records that workers brought from India sued BAPS, alleging 80-hour weeks building its New Jersey temple for about $450 a month; BAPS disputed the claims.

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



A godman is convicted, the organization continues, and the political patrons who courted him stay silent.

How it runs.

1. Criticism of a guru is met as spiritual disqualification, and devotees who report abuse are labeled deluded (section 11, technique 12).
2. No religious body examines the guru, so the case reaches a criminal court (sections 5 and 7).
3. The conviction comes late, after the evidence becomes impossible to bury (sections 16 and 19).
4. The organization continues and its political patrons stay silent (section 14).
5. The page predicts that the organization will restructure and that no trust will publish accounts (section 14), so the structure that produced the case survives it.

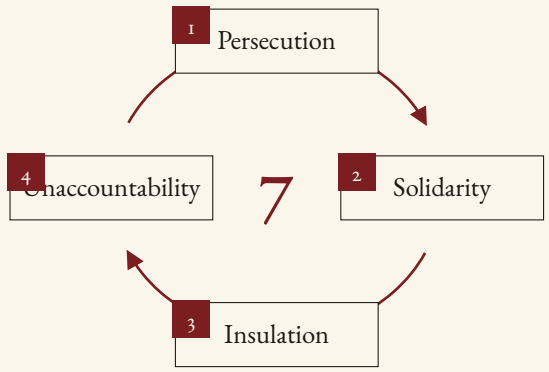
Techniques that feed it. 12 · DARVO, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 29 · Replacement, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. Courts remove the man, not the arrangement. Section 7 records that when a guru harms, there is no chair above him to appeal to, and the first authority able to act is a judge.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. Section 23 (question 3) asks what a guru's organization changed structurally after the conviction. It weakens only if a body with standing above the guru acts, and section 7 records that none exists; the criminal courts and the electoral accountability of those who court gurus are the routes the page names in section 8. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 19 records that Asaram's life sentence was upheld in 2026 after he had been out on bail since October 2025.

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



The category 'Hinduism' is partly a colonial administrative product, and caste criticism is then reframed as a foreign attack.

How it runs.

1. The category 'Hinduism' was codified as a single religion under colonial rule and is partly a colonial administrative product (section 5).
2. Caste may then be described as colonial distortion, or as culture and not religion, whenever it is criticized (technique 10, section 3).
3. Critics of caste, guru abuse or family coercion are labeled anti-Hindu, Westernized or colonized (techniques 12 and 17).
4. Families and guru circles deliver the same message to the critic, and the critic is cast as the offender (techniques 11 and 16).
5. Nothing changes inside, and the next critic is met the same way.

Techniques that feed it. 10 · Strategic Ambiguity, 11 · Projection, 12 · DARVO, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 17 · Smear Campaign.

Why it closes. Every criticism can be read as an attack from outside, so the criticism strengthens the solidarity that protects the arrangement.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. Section 20 records the bhakti tradition's own rejection of caste and priestcraft (Kabir, Basava, Ravidas and the Alvars) as coming centuries before any colonial critique, which answers the claim that criticism is foreign. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Technique 12 records that a person who challenges caste discrimination or guru abuse may be attacked as anti-Hindu, Westernized, disrespectful or colonized.

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
Hinduism has no dogma, no church, and no excommunication.	True institutionally, and irrelevant to the person disowned by their family for an inter-caste marriage.	GOVERNMENT REPORT
Caste is a social system, not a religious one.	The text that ranks people is scripture; the constitution that unranked them is not.	ACADEMIC SOURCE
Temple wealth belongs to the deity and the devotees.	It is administered by state departments and drawn on by governments, and no audited annual accounts are recorded on this page.	OFFICIAL POLICY / FINANCIAL RECORD

A true guru is beyond such accusations.	Two leaders of movements with mass followings were convicted, while devotees insisted it was impossible.	COURT RECORD

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. The last time was the convictions of two mass-following gurus, with their organizations continuing and their political patrons silent.

Who holds the chair now. Temple trust boards, hereditary priesthoods and living gurus with vote banks hold it.

Prediction. The next case will require a journalist to die or a court to intervene, the organization will restructure, and no trust will publish accounts.

The last time was the convictions of two mass-following gurus, with their organizations continuing and their political patrons silent.

Words used here

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS INSIDE	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Karma (as a social explanation)	The moral law of cause and effect across lives.	It is profound as metaphysics; as a social account of someone's caste or poverty it converts a structural injustice into a personal deserving.	'Your position is what you earned.'
Guru-seva / guru-dakshina	They are service and offering to the teacher.	They are a genuine devotional practice, and the mechanism through which unaudited wealth reaches individual gurus with nothing above them.	'Give to the man, and there is no chair above him to ask.'
Dharma (as duty enforcement)	It means one's proper role and obligations.	It is deployed to make an assigned social position — especially a woman's — feel like a cosmic office rather than a negotiable arrangement.	'Your place is metaphysical, so stop discussing it.'

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

- Caste operates as a birth-assigned enforcement grid; inter-caste marriage still triggers ostracism and violence in documented cases.
  GOVERNMENT REPORT / COURT RECORD · honor-killing prosecutions
- Leaving a guru movement costs the community and sometimes invested life savings; leaving Hindu identity in nationalist contexts reads as national betrayal.

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Caste standing	Yes	Caste is assigned at birth, and inter-caste marriage triggers ostracism and documented violence.	“Caste is a social system, not religion.”
Family and marriage	Yes	Families apply honor pressure, and honor killings are documented and prosecuted in Indian courts.	“Crime, not culture.”
Guru movement exit	Yes	Leavers lose community, invested savings and years of unpaid service, and are labeled traitors to the lineage.	“Devotion is voluntary.”
Spiritual threat	Yes	Leaving is framed as carrying karmic consequences, and misfortune is attributed to abandoning dharma.	“It's just how karma works.”

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Medium	Caste has textual sanction and temple rules are written, but no central body issues doctrine.
Informal enforcement	High	Family, caste council, and community reputation do essentially all the work.
Leadership distance	Very high	No pope, no synod, no membership — decentralization is the strongest deniability shield in this codex.
Doctrinal ambiguity	Very high	Any practice can be attributed to a different sampradaya, region, or era.
Cultural outsourcing	Very high	Caste, dowry, and honor violence are all reclassified as culture, not religion.
Volunteer enforcement	High	Panchayats, relatives, and neighbors enforce; no institution ever orders it.
Sacred secrecy	Medium	Guru-disciple confidentiality and ashram insularity shield conduct.
Exit cost denial	High	'Hinduism has no dogma and no excommunication' — true institutionally, and irrelevant to the person disowned by their family.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

There is no excommunication in Hinduism, and the say-do table says that is true institutionally and "irrelevant to the person disowned by their family for an inter-caste marriage." Caste works as an enforcement grid assigned at birth. If your son or daughter wanted to marry across caste, what would your family do? What would you do?

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

- Political Hindutva benefits: parties and movements convert religious identity into electoral majority and define national belonging religiously. ACADEMIC SOURCE / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- State governments that administer temple funds, hereditary priesthoods with ritual monopolies, and godmen with corporate empires and political protection also benefit. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Money out, leverage back

- Diaspora funding flows into religious-nationalist political projects, and religious identity is converted into electoral majority and a definition of who belongs to the nation. Devotion becomes constituency. ACADEMIC SOURCE / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- State governments administer major temple funds — a religious-fiscal fusion in which offerings made to a deity are budgeted by a political administration. OFFICIAL POLICY / FINANCIAL RECORD
- Godmen with mass followings receive political protection because their followers vote as blocs; convictions came late and only after the evidence became impossible to bury. COURT RECORD
- Global yoga and wellness exports generate enormous revenue for organizations and gurus, with the practice detached from any

accountability structure in its source tradition. PATTERN OBSERVED

Who pays

- Dalits and lower-caste communities pay, bearing the tradition's oldest and largest structural harm. GOVERNMENT REPORT
- Women pay through dowry, menstrual exclusion, widow stigma and guru abuse.
- Inter-caste and inter-faith couples pay through ostracism and, in prosecuted cases, killing (section 17).
- Children in unregulated ashram schools pay through documented abuse with weak oversight (section 17).
- Devotees of convicted godmen pay, having lost savings and years of labor.
- Religious minorities in India pay, under majoritarian pressure. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Dalits and lower-caste communities pay, bearing the tradition's oldest and largest structural harm.

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 costs in section 15 do not fall evenly. The table names who carries the most, how they carry it, and what makes it worse.

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
Dalits	Dalits carry the tradition's oldest and largest structural harm, including exclusion, violence and separate facilities.	It compounds with landlessness and with local police alignment with dominant castes.
Women	Women face dowry, menstrual exclusion, widow stigma and documented guru sexual abuse.	It compounds catastrophically for Dalit women, who absorb both axes at once.
Inter-caste and inter-faith couples	Couples face ostracism and, in prosecuted cases, killing.	It compounds where the family's standing depends on the marriage.

Children in unregulated ashram schools	Children suffer documented abuse with weak oversight.	It compounds where the ashram is also the family's spiritual authority.
Devotees of convicted godmen	Devotees lose savings and years of unpaid service, with no recovery.	It compounds for those who spoke and were exiled before the convictions.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Dalits come first in this table: the tradition's oldest and largest structural harm, compounded by landlessness and by local police aligned with dominant castes. Then women, facing dowry, menstrual exclusion, widow stigma and documented abuse by gurus. If you are not Dalit, ask yourself honestly: in your family's village, or your family, is there still a separate cup?

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.

Below the temple boards, the guru thrones and the caste councils, the work is done by people who see decisions without making them: salaried priests, trust employees and accountants, ashram managers, caste-council members and family elders, and teachers in religious trusts. The table sets out what each role does, what it sees, what it is asked to do and where it could refuse.

ROLE	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Temple priests on salary	Perform the rites and live on a fraction of what passes through the hundi	They see the gap between the offering and the wage.	Keep the ritual moving	To operate tiered access that prices proximity to the deity
Temple trust employees and accountants	Handle the money	They see the allocations and the diversions.	Treat it as government business	To close accounts that are never published

Ashram managers and senior devotees	Run the organization around a living guru	They see which complaints arrive and where they go.	Protect the guru's reputation	To characterize a devotee's report as envy
Caste-council members and family elders	Enforce the marriage rules that no institution issued	They see that doctrine is against them.	Uphold community standing	To attend the ostracism
Schoolteachers in religious trusts	Teach children the karmic explanation of their own position	They see which children have been told their poverty is deserved.	Follow the syllabus	To teach a child that their family's caste is their own fault

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?

The table sets out what each role does, what it sees, what it is asked to do and where it could refuse.

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.

Sabarimala temple entry judgment

WHEN: 2018

WHAT: India's Supreme Court held that excluding women of menstruating age from a major temple was unconstitutional, converting a question of custom into a question of rights.

RECORD: Supreme Court of India judgment

OUTCOME: The judgment met mass resistance and subsequent review petitions. It demonstrates purity custom operating without doctrinal necessity. A nine-judge bench heard the wider questions in 2026 and reserved judgment on 14 May 2026, with the verdict expected in October 2026 [26]; the 2018 ruling stands meanwhile.

TACTICS: 22 · Benevolent Control

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Sources for this section: [5]

A guru's conviction, and the acquittals (India, 2017–2026)

WHEN: 2017–2026

WHAT: Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, head of the Dera Sacha Sauda, was convicted of rape on 25 August 2017 and is serving 20 years [3]. His two murder convictions were overturned by the High Court in 2024 and 2026 [1][2].

RECORD: Punjab & Haryana High Court judgments [1][2]; Outlook India [3]

OUTCOME: The rape sentence stands, and his appeal against the rape conviction is pending [2][4]; the victim's family appealed the 2026 acquittal to the Supreme Court [2].

TACTICS: 30 · Plausible Deniability, 12 · DARVO, 16 · Flying Monkeys

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

A life sentence upheld (India, 2026)

WHEN: 2026

WHAT: Asaram, a spiritual leader with a large following, was serving a life sentence for raping a minor and had been out on bail since October 2025 [4].

RECORD: Rajasthan High Court, 27 May 2026 [4]

OUTCOME: The High Court upheld the life sentence and cancelled bail, while acquitting him on gang-rape and conspiracy counts [4]. The Supreme Court refused him bail on 30 June 2026 and issued notice to Rajasthan on his appeal [30].

TACTICS: 30 · Plausible Deniability, 12 · DARVO

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

A temple built on whose labour? (United States, 2021–2025)

WHEN: 2021–2025

WHAT: Workers brought from India on religious visas sued BAPS, alleging they worked 80-hour weeks building its temple in Robbinsville, New Jersey, for about $450 a month, most of it paid into accounts in India; BAPS disputed the claims [7].

RECORD: CNN, 12 May 2021 [7]; Religion News Service, 19 September 2025 [6]

OUTCOME: The Justice Department closed its investigation without charges; the civil case continues [6].

TACTICS: 26 · Financial Control

GRADE: CONTESTED

The rationalist who was shot (India, 2013–2026)

WHEN: 2013–2026

WHAT: Narendra Dabholkar, who campaigned against superstition and exploitative "godmen", was shot dead in Pune on 20 August 2013 [18].

RECORD: Scroll, 10 May 2024 [18]; News Arena India, 18 August 2026 [19]

OUTCOME: Two men were convicted in 2024 and three acquitted [18]; in 2026 the High Court suspended one convict's life sentence and granted him bail [19], calling the identification evidence "extremely weak" and finding "fair chances" of acquittal on appeal [29].

TACTICS: none recorded

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Five 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
Asaram's rape conviction was upheld on appeal in 2026 [4]; Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh's appeal against his rape conviction is pending [24].	Complainants and journalists brought them, and some of those people were killed.	2017–2026	It cost a journalist's life and years of intimidation.
The constitution abolished untouchability and set up reservation policy.	Ambedkar and the anti-caste movement won it.	1950	It cost seventy-six years of resistance in practice, from 1950 to 2026.
The bhakti tradition rejected caste and priestcraft from within.	Kabir, Basava, Ravidas and the Alvars (Tamil devotional poet-saints) did so.	It happened in the medieval period, centuries before any colonial critique.	No persecution of them is recorded on this page.
The Supreme Court ruled in favor of temple entry at Sabarimala.	The petitioners and the Supreme Court achieved it.	2018	It met mass resistance and review petitions.

What would change this page

If matrimonial platforms dropped caste fields under community pressure rather than statute, that would revise the strongest cultural-enforcement

finding on this page.

Sources for this section: 1 4 5

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 Hinduism who raised the hard question publicly, often at real cost. They answer the objection that criticism only ever comes from outsiders.

- **Bindu Ammini and Kanakadurga.** They were the first women to enter Sabarimala after the 2018 ruling, on 2 January 2019, under police escort. Bindu Ammini later had to leave Kerala after attacks [17].
- **Narendra Dabholkar.** He founded Maharashtra's anti-superstition movement and was murdered in 2013 [18]. The state's anti-superstition ordinance came four days later (section 8).
- **The campaigners for California's caste bill.** They held a hunger strike at the Capitol in 2023 [15].
- **The Robbinsville temple workers.** They sued BAPS, alleging forced labor, and BAPS disputed the claims (section 19) [7].
- **Kabir, Basava and the Alvars.** Medieval devotional poets who rejected caste and priestly mediation from inside the tradition (section 20) [13].
- **B. R. Ambedkar.** He burned the Manusmriti at Mahad in 1927 and chaired the committee that drafted the constitution that abolished untouchability (section 5) [8].

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.

India

APEX: No apex. Major temples in several states are administered by government-appointed boards under state endowment acts.

LAW: The State Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Acts govern major temples, and the Right to Information Act reaches government-administered temple boards. Article 17 abolished untouchability in 1950.

DOCUMENTED: The record includes temple treasury administration by state boards, rape convictions of guru figures including Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and Asaram Bapu, and ongoing litigation over temple entry.

EXIT: Family and caste consequences dominate, and institutional exit costs are low because there is little institution to exit.

REGULATOR: The regulators are the state endowment departments, the RTI process, which is the most usable route on this card, and the criminal courts.

TELL: Government-administered temple boards fall under the Right to Information Act, so a member can file a request about the temple's money.

Diaspora (UK, US, Canada)

APEX: The apex is individual temple trusts and transnational movements, including BAPS, ISKCON and others.

LAW: Oversight comes from the Charity Commission (the charity regulator for England and Wales), IRS 990s (the annual returns filed by US non-profits) for non-church-classified entities, and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) listings. Labour law applies to construction and temple work.

DOCUMENTED US federal litigation concerning workers at a large religious construction project brought forced-labour and wage claims into court. A federal criminal investigation closed without charges in 2025; the civil case continues. UK charity filings for major temple trusts are public.

EXIT: The consequences fall on community and marriage, and the institutional cost is generally low.

REGULATOR: The regulators are the Charity Commission, the CRA and the IRS, together with labour and wage-and-hour authorities.

TELL: Diaspora institutions are frequently more disclosed than their home-country counterparts, because they registered as charities in jurisdictions that require accounts.

Sources for this section: [6] [7]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers India and Diaspora (UK, US, Canada). 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

Untouchability has been illegal since 1950. Ask why your village, or your family, still has two sets of cups.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Law can abolish a practice on paper while it continues in homes. The question moves from the constitution to your own kitchen.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records that the Constitution abolished untouchability in 1950 (Article 17) [8]. The say-do table records that Hinduism has no excommunication, which is "irrelevant to the person disowned by their family for an inter-caste marriage."

QUESTION 2 OF 6

If karma explains a Dalit child's poverty, explain what it says about the family that inherited the land.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If karma explains one child's poverty, it must also explain another family's inherited land. The question asks whether the teaching is being used to justify an existing order.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The techniques section records that present suffering "can be explained as past-life karma," with improvement promised through devotion, ritual, caste obligation and offerings.

QUESTION 3 OF 6

Two godmen with mass followings were convicted of rape. Name one thing their organizations changed structurally afterward.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A conviction removes one man. Structural change prevents the next case. The question asks whether anything changed besides the man.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The cases section records Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, convicted of rape in 2017 and serving 20 years, and Asaram, whose life sentence for raping a minor was upheld after he had been out on bail since October 2025.

QUESTION 4 OF 6

Tirupati's own 2022 white paper records a net worth of ₹2.26 lakh crore. Ask for the audited accounts. Note who tells you the question is disrespectful.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A temple that publishes a white paper has shown it can disclose. The question asks for full audited accounts, and notices who calls the request disrespectful.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The money section records Tirupati's 2022 white paper: a net worth of ₹2.26 lakh crore and 10.25 tonnes of gold on deposit [10].

QUESTION 5 OF 6

If a guru cannot be questioned, then a guru cannot be wrong — so on what basis would you ever detect one who was?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If a guru cannot be questioned, there is no mechanism for detecting a bad one until a court does it. The question asks what the tradition's own mechanism is.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The techniques section records that harder structures, including guru obedience, often appear only after a newcomer has encountered the tradition's gentler face. The cases section shows courts, not religious bodies, delivering the verdicts.

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You were taught that caste is culture, not religion. Ask why the text that ranks people is scripture and the constitution that unranked them is not.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

The claim that caste is culture, not religion, protects the religious texts from criticism. The question asks why the text that ranks people is treated as scripture, and the constitution that unranked them is not.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records that the Dharmashastra literature, including the Manusmriti, gave caste "scriptural sanction," and that Ambedkar publicly burned a copy at Mahad in 1927.

In closing

The strongest critique of everything in this profile was written inside your tradition, centuries before any colonial critic. Kabir mocked priestcraft. Basava rejected caste. Nammalvar and the bhakti poets said God does not check your birth. That lineage is yours, and it is older than the machinery.

You do not have to stop lighting the lamp to stop funding a man. You do not have to abandon dharma to notice that someone has been selling it. Decentralization means no one can excommunicate you — which means you, more than almost any reader of this codex, are already free to refuse. The only thing holding the arrangement together is that so few people ask.

Sources for this section: [8]

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. **Leaving a guru movement** is legally free; if you work or live at an ashram, secure your documents, money and a place to stay first.

2. **Caste discrimination at work** is covered by existing law in some places and expressly in Seattle [15][16].
3. **If you face a forced marriage or honour-based abuse,** use specialist help [22].
4. **If you were abused by a guru or temple official,** go to the police; Indian courts have convicted even the most powerful [3][4].
5. **Find support** through the helplines listed in section 25 [20][21].

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?

Caste discrimination at work is covered by existing law in some places and expressly in Seattle.

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) [20]

Recovering from Religion	People questioning or leaving faith	US, Canada and online	**(844) 368-2848** [21]
Karma Nirvana	Honour-based abuse, forced marriage	UK	**0800 5999 247** [22]
NAPAC	Adult survivors of childhood abuse	UK	**0808 801 0331** [23]

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.

Courts

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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:** Corrected the count of murder convictions overturned, the status of the rape appeals, the follower figures, the sourced-technique count and the grades of three techniques; added sources for the riot toll, the Sabarimala schedule, the Seattle law and the honor-killing directions; removed template cards that did not fit Hinduism; and softened claims the sources did not support.
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers (BAPS UK accounts 2020–2024), five documented cases, Voices from inside, 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.