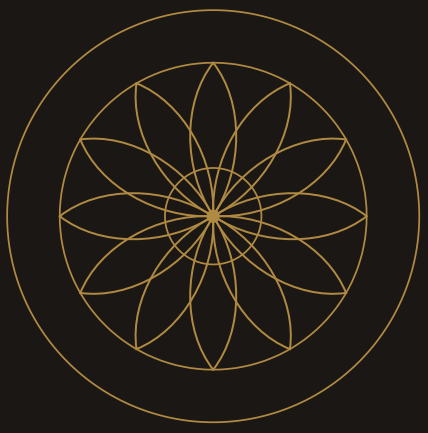


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Orthodox / Hasidic Judaism

Judaism family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

Before you begin

This is the record of Orthodox / Hasidic Judaism 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 Orthodox / Hasidic Judaism 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	Israel's Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) population is about 1.45 million (14.3% of Israelis) in the Israel Democracy Institute's 2025 report [20] and has been doubling roughly every 17 years [8]; no source on this page gives a worldwide total (UNVERIFIED). The Orthodox population as a whole, including Modern Orthodox Jews, is larger. ACADEMIC SOURCE
WHO'S IN CHARGE	Power sits with the rebbe's court. A rebbe is the hereditary spiritual head of a Hasidic (pietist, rebbe-led) dynasty. The named dynasties are Satmar, split since 2006 between the brothers Aaron Teitelbaum (Kiryas Joel) and Zalman Teitelbaum (Williamsburg); Ger, under Yaakov Aryeh Alter; and Belz, under Yissachar Dov Rokeach. Chabad has left its chair empty since 1994 and governs by board instead.
CHOSEN BY	The rebbe is chosen by bloodline, settled where necessary by succession fights.

REMOVABLE BY	No one can remove him, and no procedure exists or has ever existed.
MONEY IN ONE LINE	The money comes from communal economies (tuition, kosher premiums, ritual costs and wedding economies) and from charitable funds (gemachs, or interest-free loan funds) that also create dependency webs.
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	Leaving carries among the highest exit costs of any Western religious community. Leavers routinely lose their spouse, their children (in custody battles where the community funds the observant parent), their parents, their siblings and their employment, and because they were denied a secular education, they often lack marketable skills. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT / COURT RECORD · documented custody cases; org: Footsteps
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	If the community is voluntary, why did it take state investigators to establish what its own schools were not teaching its own children?
EVIDENCE	Seven of the 30 techniques are sourced to a named document. The grades are Cultural 23, Codified 2 and Documented 5.
FAMILY	Judaism — judaism, orthodox-hasidic-judaism
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

ACCOUNTS	PAY	SAFEGUARDING	EXTERNAL FIRST	REMOVAL	REPLY
NO	NO	NO	NO	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 "The rebbe is chosen by bloodline, settled where necessary by succession fights", and to who can remove its holder, "No one can remove him, and no procedure exists or has ever existed". 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 accounts, leaders' pay, a public safeguarding policy, allegations going to police first, 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.

Chava · A Tuesday in Cheshvan (an autumn month in the Jewish calendar) · Brooklyn

Up at 5:40. Six children, the oldest fifteen, the youngest nine months. Lunches, uniforms, the baby on her hip while she checks that Yossi has his siddur (prayer book). The apartment is loud and warm and full and she would not trade it for anything on earth, and this is important to say first because it is true.

Yossi is thirteen. He reads Hebrew beautifully. He also cannot do long division and does not know what a continent is, and last week he asked her what a résumé was because he heard the word on a delivery man's radio. She said she would explain later. She did not explain later.

At ten she takes the baby to the clinic and passes the shop where the sign about the modesty guidelines is taped inside the door. Two months ago the committee spoke to Devorah Rosen's husband about Devorah's wig, and then Devorah's husband lost three accounts, and nobody said the two things were connected because nobody had to.

At two her sister calls about Malka. Malka is twenty-two and is not going to shidduchim meetings (the arranged introductions to prospective husbands) and has been seen without stockings, and the family is worried, and the way her sister says *worried* means: this will affect the younger girls. Chava says she'll talk to her. She will.

Her cousin's son left last year. He is somewhere in Manhattan. Nobody says his name at the table, and Chava, who used to babysit him, thinks about him at odd moments — at the sink, or during candle-lighting — and then stops, because the thought does not go anywhere she can follow.

At 11:15 the house is finally quiet. She sits at the kitchen table with tea she will not finish and thinks about Yossi and the word résumé, and then she thinks that Torah is the highest thing there is and that she believes this

completely, and both thoughts are in her head at the same time, and she does not know what to do with the fact that they will not fit together.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

03 The forefront

BEFORE YOU READ

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

> You may have the warmest community in the Western world. Many accounts describe real mutual aid, neighbors who show up and little loneliness, and this codex will not pretend otherwise; no source on this page measures them. But you also live in the one community here where identity and institution are the same object, which means the cost of a single honest question is higher for you than for almost anyone else reading this.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

If the community is voluntary, why did it take state investigators to establish what its own schools were not teaching its own children?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Nobody is forced to stay. Anyone may leave.	Boys leave school without English or arithmetic, and community funds appear on one side of custody cases.	GOVERNMENT REPORT / COURT RECORD

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Leaving costs a person their family, spouse and children.	Yes, this cost is documented.	Divorce and custody proceedings occur in which the community funds the observant parent, and leavers report shunning that is total.	"Family estrangement is their own doing."

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. Outsiders romanticize leaving and cannot see what the community gives.

What is true in it. The objection is accurate on this point. Many accounts describe extraordinary mutual aid and little loneliness, though no source on this page measures either, and secular accounts of Haredi life are frequently condescending and wrong.

The answer. The claims here come from inside: rabbis ruling that abuse reporting is not mesirah (the prohibition on informing to secular

authorities), parents fighting for English literacy, court records in custody cases. The ask is narrow — that a child can read, can tell someone, and can leave without losing his mother. A community loses nothing worth keeping by granting it.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *If the community is voluntary, why did it take state investigators to establish what its own schools were not teaching its own children?* 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 Orthodox / Hasidic Judaism, 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.

> Orthodox / Hasidic Judaism consists of traditionalist and ultra-Orthodox (Haredi and Hasidic) communities that emphasize full halachic observance (observance of Jewish law). It is the fastest-growing segment of the Jewish population, owing to birth rates.

Healthy practice here looks like communities that strengthen secular education and abuse reporting. It includes internal reformers, among them rabbis who have ruled that abuse reporting is not mesirah. It includes support organizations for leavers and for those who stay. It also includes the warmth, mutual aid and low loneliness that critics should acknowledge.

Some of that standard is already on the record. Rabbi Elyashiv permitted reporting abuse where there is a substantial basis [6]. Footsteps, founded in

December 2003 by Malkie Schwartz to help people leaving ultra-Orthodox life, has served nearly 3,000 people [7]. Each is a place where members or institutions met the standard this page applies, and each is recorded here as credit.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

05 History

BEFORE YOU READ

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

Hasidism arose in 18th-century Eastern Europe around charismatic rebbes and dynastic courts; post-Holocaust reconstruction in

Brooklyn, Jerusalem, and elsewhere rebuilt total communities with intentional insulation.

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



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

1

1740S–1770S

Baal Shem Tov's movement; Hasidism spreads in Eastern Europe

Charismatic rebbes create a new authority type: personal, dynastic, spiritually total.

2

1772–1800S

Vilna Gaon's opposition; Mitnagdim (the rabbinic opponents of Hasidism)/Hasidic split; yeshiva (religious academy) movement founded

Two rival systems — dynastic charisma and scholastic elitism — both intensely authoritative.

3

1800S

Dynastic courts formalize (Satmar, Belz, Ger, Lubavitch, Bobov and others)

Succession becomes hereditary property, with institutions as the estate.

4 1881–1939

Migration; Agudath Israel founded 1912 as political vehicle

Religious authority learns electoral politics.

5 1939–1945

The Holocaust destroys the European heartland

Reconstruction is driven by an explicit mandate: rebuild population and insulate from the outside world.

6 1946–1970S

Rebuilding in Brooklyn, Jerusalem, Bnei Brak, Montreal, London

Total communities designed deliberately — schools, housing, employment, marriage inside one boundary.

7 1977–PRESENT

Israeli coalition politics gives Haredi parties leverage over budgets and draft exemptions

State funding sustains a full-time-study economic model. OFFICIAL POLICY

8 1990S–PRESENT

Explosive demographic growth; global Chabad emissary network [23]

The fastest-growing Jewish segment by far.

9 2000S–PRESENT

Abuse prosecutions (Nechemya Weberman and others); mesirah taboo challenged from within

Reporting to police becomes a live internal fight. COURT RECORD

10 2012–PRESENT

New York yeshiva secular-education investigations; Footsteps and OTD (off the derech, "off the path", meaning former members) networks grow

Education standards and exit support become public policy questions. GOVERNMENT REPORT / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Moments in the room

1972 — WISCONSIN V. YODER

The US Supreme Court exempted Old Order Amish children from compulsory schooling past eighth grade on free-exercise grounds. The reasoning has been invoked far beyond the Amish ever since.

Why it matters. One ruling about one community became the constitutional architecture behind decades of educational under-provision in insular religious communities. The child's own interest was the party least represented in the case.

2015–2023 — A CITY INVESTIGATES ITS OWN YESHIVAS

New York City's investigation into secular instruction in Hasidic boys' yeshivas took years, faced sustained political resistance, and eventually found 18 of the 39 schools examined not substantially equivalent; 14 of those findings still need the state's affirmation [4].

Why it matters. The state established what a community's own institutions would not: what its children were being taught. The length of the delay is the finding as much as the result.

2012–2026 — NECHEMYA WEBERMAN, AND THE SEATS IN THE COURTROOM

A prominent Satmar counsellor was convicted in December 2012 of sustained sexual abuse of a girl who had been sent to him. Members of the community filled the courtroom in his support; the victim's family faced boycott and pressure. His 103-year sentence was cut to 50 in 2013 and, in January 2026, to 18 years after he admitted guilt.

Why it matters. This one room shows the mechanism: the community's enforcement apparatus was deployed against the family that used the courts, and the abuser was left alone.

Sources for this section: 1 2 3 4 9 23

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

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

The main branches are the Hasidic dynasties (Satmar, Ger, Belz, Vizhnitz, Chabad and many more); the Litvish or yeshivish world (the Lithuanian-style, Talmud-centered stream); Sephardi Haredi communities (the constituency of Shas, the Sephardi Haredi party in Israel); and Modern Orthodox Jews, who form a distinct and much more open category.

BRANCH	WHERE	WHERE AUTHORITY SITS
Hasidic dynasties (Satmar, Ger, Belz, Vizhnitz, Chabad and others)	Hasidic communities are found in New York, Israel, London, Antwerp and Montreal.	Authority sits with a hereditary rebbe and his court [9]; Satmar has two rival rebbes, brothers, each leading a faction [10].
Litvish / yeshivish	Litvish communities are found in Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom.	Authority sits with the heads of yeshivas and senior rabbis, and Agudath Israel, founded in 1912, serves as a political voice [9].
Sephardi Haredi	Sephardi Haredi communities are found in Israel.	Authority sits with rabbis aligned with the Shas party.

Modern Orthodox	Modern Orthodox communities are found worldwide.	Authority is far more open in this category, which is covered on the Judaism page.

Israel's Haredi population was **1.39 million** (13.9%) in 2024 [8] and about 1.45 million (14.3%) in the Israel Democracy Institute's 2025 report [20], growing about 4% a year [8].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Orthodox / Hasidic Judaism, 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	Israel's Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) population is about 1.45 million (14.3% of Israelis) in the Israel Democracy Institute's 2025 report [20] and has been doubling roughly every 17 years [8]; no source on this page gives a worldwide total (UNVERIFIED). The Orthodox population as a whole, including Modern Orthodox Jews, is larger. ACADEMIC SOURCE
Regions	The main regions are Israel (Jerusalem, Bnei Brak, Beit Shemesh), New York (Brooklyn and Rockland and Orange counties), Montreal, London (Stamford Hill), Antwerp and Melbourne.
Trend	Haredi communities have the highest fertility of any Western religious group, averaging 6–7 children in core communities, and are projected to reshape Jewish demography and Israeli politics within decades. ACADEMIC SOURCE
Participation	Unlike most entries in this codex, identity and institutional participation are nearly identical here — which is exactly why exit costs are so high.

Authority

- Authority is held by rebbes (dynastic, lifetime and hereditary) and poskim (rabbis who issue rulings on Jewish law). Modesty committees enforce communal norms. Rabbinic courts (batei din) adjudicate internal disputes, with strong norms against using secular courts (the mesirah taboo). ACADEMIC SOURCE

- Control of schools, matchmaking, housing networks, and kosher supervision gives leadership leverage over every life domain.

The top of the chain

> The apex is a throne, held for life, passed by blood — and beneath it, the real enforcers hold no office at all.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
The rebbe's court	The named dynasties sit here: Satmar, split since 2006 between the brothers Aaron Teitelbaum (Kiryas Joel) and Zalman Teitelbaum (Williamsburg) [10] [22]; Ger, under Yaakov Aryeh Alter; and Belz, under Yissachar Dov Rokeach. Chabad has left its chair empty since 1994 and governs by board instead.	The rebbe is chosen by bloodline, settled where necessary by succession fights.	No one can remove him, and no procedure exists or has ever existed.
The Council of Torah Sages (Agudath Israel)	The seats are held by senior rebbes and roshei yeshiva (heads of yeshivas).	Members are chosen by co-option (existing members select new ones).	No one can remove them.
The community's working enforcers	The enforcers are matchmakers, school admission committees and modesty committees, which are unlisted, unappointed and unappealable.	No one formally chooses them, which is the point.	No one can remove them.

THE TELL

The person who can end your child's marriage prospects has no office, no name on a door, and no complaint form. Deniability here is not a defect of the structure. It is the structure.

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
Dynastic courts	They are hereditary authority.	Rebbes and their families hold this power.	They hold institutions, real estate, schools, and succession as inheritable property.	They decide your child's school, your marriage prospects and your housing.	COURT RECORD · dynastic succession litigation
Haredi political parties	They are political actors.	Party leaderships hold this power.	They hold bloc votes, which they convert into study stipends, draft exemptions and curriculum autonomy.	They decide whether your son will be taught English.	OFFICIAL POLICY / GOVERNMENT REPORT
Yeshiva networks receiving public funding	They are educational institutions.	School administrations hold this power.	They hold public money alongside exemption from secular-education standards.	They decide your son's literacy, and therefore his ability to ever leave.	GOVERNMENT REPORT · New York State and City education findings

Modesty committees (vaad hatznius)	They are informal enforcers.	Self-constituted community figures hold this power.	They run pressure campaigns against women, families and businesses, with no mandate and no appeal.	They decide what you wear, and whether your husband keeps his customers.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Gemachs and communal charity funds	They provide welfare and leverage.	Community machers (influential figures) hold this power.	They hold interest-free credit, which is genuine aid and a dependency web at once.	They can decide whether a family receives aid, and by community accounts standing counts in that decision.	PATTERN OBSERVED
Shidduch brokers and school admissions committees	They are gatekeepers.	Matchmakers and school heads hold this power.	They hold your children's marriage and education prospects, contingent on the whole family's conformity.	They decide your daughter's future, priced against your compliance.	PATTERN OBSERVED

Sources for this section: 8 10 20 22

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

In the Hasidic world the top of the chain is a rebbe's court, passed down by bloodline and settled by succession fights where necessary. The glance table records that no procedure to remove a rebbe exists or has ever existed. Satmar has been split between two brothers since 2006. If you belong to a court, your schooling, your marriage match and often your work run through its institutions. Who, other than the rebbe, could tell the rebbe he was wrong?

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 (continued)	WHAT THE LAW DOES	WHAT HAPPENED
New York — schools	Private schools must give an education "substantially equivalent" to public schools. In 2022 the Board of Regents adopted rules on how that is decided; a state trial court in Albany struck down parts of them, an appeals court reinstated them, and on 18 June 2025 the Court of Appeals upheld the challenged provisions [11] [19]	The city's Department of Education found 18 of 39 yeshivas examined not substantially equivalent in 2023, and the state must still affirm 14 of those findings [4]. Separately, a 2022 *New York Times* investigation found that about 100 Hasidic schools had received more than $1 billion in government funding over four years [11] [12] [21]
New York — abuse	Criminal law applies whatever the community's rules on informing (*mesirah*) [1]	Nechemya Weberman was convicted on 59 counts in 2012; community leaders later sought clemency for him [1] [2]
Israel — military service	The High Court ruled unanimously in 2024 that the army must draft Haredi men and cut funding to yeshivas whose students do not comply [5]	The blanket exemption had lasted decades [5]
Israel — funding	Coalition agreements fund Haredi schools, yeshivas and kollels [13]	The Israel Democracy Institute found irregular funding and weakened parliamentary oversight in the 2025 budget [13]
Internal rule	Agudath Israel's rabbinical board requires consulting a rabbi before reporting abuse [6]	Some senior rabbis permit reporting where there is a substantial basis [6]

Who can compel an answer

Those who can compel an answer are state education authorities (the substantial-equivalency route has already produced findings), child-protection services and the courts. The internal structure has no address to write to; the external ones do.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a New York taxpayer, this section is partly about your money. The city's 2023 determinations found 18 of 39 yeshivas examined not "substantially equivalent" to public schools (14 of those findings still await state affirmation), and a 2022 New York Times investigation found that about 100 Hasidic schools had received more than $1 billion in government funding. In Israel, the High Court ruled unanimously in 2024 that the army must draft Haredi men. Did you know your taxes help fund schools that may not teach your neighbor's son English or arithmetic? Is that a question of religious freedom, or of a child's rights?

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

- The money comes from communal economies (tuition, kosher premiums, ritual costs and wedding economies) and from charitable funds (gemachs) that also create dependency webs.
- In Israel, the money also comes from state stipends for full-time Torah study, negotiated by Haredi parties. This is public money sustaining the community's economic model. OFFICIAL POLICY / GOVERNMENT REPORT

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Tuition, ritual costs, kosher premiums	The stated purpose is religious life and education.	Very large family costs entrench dependence on communal aid and donors.	Schools, dynastic institutions and suppliers benefit.
Israeli state stipends for full-time study	The stated purpose is to support Torah scholarship.	Public funding sustains a model that leaves men without employable credentials and without exit options.	Institutions, political parties and the study economy benefit. OFFICIAL POLICY

Gemachs (interest-free loan funds) and charity networks	The stated purpose is genuine mutual aid.	Aid is said to be conditioned on standing, and dependency webs can make dissent costly **PATTERN OBSERVED**.	Communal power brokers benefit, and so do the genuinely needy.
Dynastic real estate and institutional assets	The stated purpose is community infrastructure.	Succession fights over control of buildings and schools reveal the property nature of authority.	Rebbe families and boards benefit. **COURT RECORD** · dynastic litigation

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS

Tuition, ritual costs, kosher premiums

STATED PURPOSE
The stated purpose is religious life and education.

HOW IT CONTROLS
Very large family costs entrench dependence on communal aid and donors.

→ Schools, dynastic institutions and suppliers benefit.

Israeli state stipends for full-time study

STATED PURPOSE
The stated purpose is to support Torah scholarship.

HOW IT CONTROLS
Public funding sustains a model that leaves men without employable credentials and without exit options.

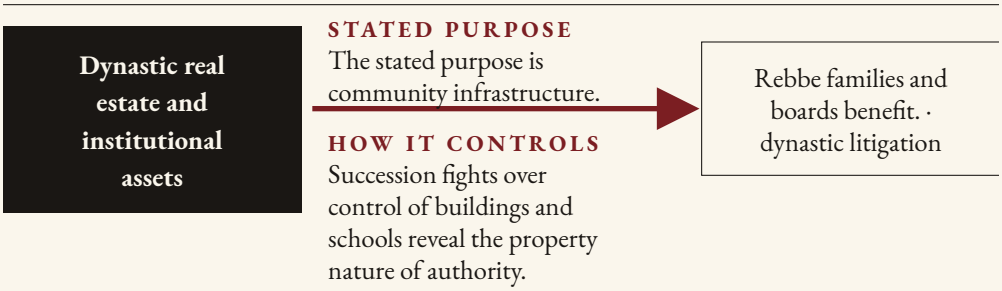
→ Institutions, political parties and the study economy benefit.

Gemachs (interest-free loan funds) and charity networks

STATED PURPOSE
The stated purpose is genuine mutual aid.

HOW IT CONTROLS
Aid is said to be conditioned on standing, and dependency webs can make dissent costly PATTERN OBSERVED .

→ Communal power brokers benefit, and so do the genuinely needy.



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

SCHOOL TUITION TO FAMILY LEVERAGE

Source. Parents fund religious education.

Path. School → Institutional network → Employment and standing leverage over the family

Disclosed. Fee schedules are disclosed.

Hidden. Conduct conditions attached to enrolment are not disclosed.

PUBLIC FUNDING TO AUTONOMOUS CURRICULUM

Source. Taxpayers fund it.

Path. Government education or welfare budget → Religious school network → Curriculum exempted from standards

Disclosed. Budget lines are disclosed.

Hidden. What is actually taught is not disclosed.

HONOR AND MARRIAGE ECONOMY

Source. Families managing reputation supply it.

Path. Matchmakers and community brokers → School admission and business trust → Conformity across the whole family

Disclosed. Nothing is disclosed.

Hidden. Everything is hidden, because none of it is written.

Money in numbers

- **New York:** Hasidic schools that were not providing a basic education received about **$1 billion** in government funding over four years, according to a 2022 *New York Times* investigation [11] [12].
- **Israel:** state money for yeshiva and kollel students and Haredi schools is set through coalition agreements; the IDI documented how the 2025 allocations avoided normal oversight [13].
- **Israel, 2024:** the High Court ordered funding cut for yeshivas whose students do not enlist [5].
- **Communal economy:** the economy runs on tuition, kosher premiums and interest-free loan funds (*gemachs*), as set out above.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The money here runs through tuition, kosher premiums, wedding economies and gemachs (community charitable funds). In Israel it also runs through state stipends for full-time Torah study, negotiated by Haredi parties. Those funds are generous, and the page notes that they also create webs of dependency. If you depend on a gemach, what would happen to that support if you started asking questions?

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?

TOTAL-COMMUNITY INSULATION

Origin. Communities were rebuilt deliberately after 1945 in Brooklyn, Jerusalem and Montreal, with explicit insulation as the design goal. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. A civilization had just been murdered. Rebuilding it required walls — against assimilation, against forgetting, against the world that had just done that. The reasoning was not paranoid; it was a response to genocide.

Why that reason expired. Eighty years on, the walls now primarily prevent departure rather than destruction. A boy who cannot read English at sixteen is not protected from assimilation; he is prevented from leaving.

Who benefits now. Dynastic institutions with guaranteed populations benefit, as do political blocs delivering votes wholesale. The bill is paid by anyone inside who ever wants out.

MESIRAH APPLIED TO ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Origin. The origin is a medieval prohibition on handing Jews to gentile (non-Jewish) authorities who tortured and expropriated them. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It was life-or-death protection when the outside court was the pogrom's legal arm.

Why that reason expired. The NYPD (New York Police Department) is not a blood-libel tribunal. Applying the rule now shields the man who assaulted a child and expels the family that called it in. Internal rulings have said abuse reporting is not mesirah; social enforcement continued anyway. COURT RECORD

Who benefits now. Abusers benefit, as do institutions whose enrollment and reputation depend on silence.

SECULAR EDUCATION DEFICIT

Origin. Yeshiva curricula prioritized Torah study and hardened, in some boys' schools during the postwar rebuilding, into near-total exclusion of secular subjects. GOVERNMENT REPORT

What it was for. It served Torah scholarship as the highest value, and a rebuilding community's need for scholars over professionals.

Why that reason expired. A child who reaches adulthood without English literacy or arithmetic has not been given a value; he has been given a locked door. State investigations have documented the deficit. This is the mechanism that makes every other exit cost enforceable.

Who benefits now. The community's retention rate benefits. A man who cannot fill out a job application in English is not choosing to stay.

SHIDDUCH AND MODESTY POLICING

Origin. The origin is arranged-marriage norms and communal modesty standards, intensified by 20th-century stringency competition. PATTERN OBSERVED

What it was for. Matchmaking in small communities protected against unsuitable unions where families were the only information network.

Why that reason expired. It has become a family-wide credit score. A daughter's marriage prospects depend on her brother's yeshiva, her mother's hair covering, and her father's silence — which converts every family member into an enforcer of everyone else's conformity.

Who benefits now. Communal power brokers who control match access benefit, as do institutions that gain enforcement without ever issuing an instruction.

Sources for this section: [6]

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

- Internet filtering, banned secular media, and community bans (cherem, a formal communal ban) on specific publications or devices are documented policy in several communities. **OFFICIAL POLICY ·** rabbinic proclamations
- Secular-education deficits in some boys' yeshivas — limited English, math, and science — are documented by state investigations, and constitute information control by omission. **GOVERNMENT REPORT**
- Mesirah (the prohibition on informing to secular authorities) suppressed abuse reporting for decades; internal rulings now contest it, but social enforcement persists. **COURT RECORD / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**

Children

- Childhood is a total institution. Children attend religious school from age 3, gender-segregated, and their curriculum, dress, language (Yiddish in many communities) and marriage pathway are all determined for them. **PATTERN OBSERVED**
- Arranged introductions (shidduchim) begin at 18–20, and family reputation determines match quality, so a child's entire future depends on parental conformity. **PATTERN OBSERVED**

- Children of leavers are the most exposed group in this codex: custody cases in which community funds support the observant parent are documented. COURT RECORD
- Corporal punishment was regularly used in the Hasidic schools examined by a 2022 *New York Times* investigation [21], and abuse reporting has been suppressed by mesirah norms [6]. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Bodies

- Gender segregation is strict from childhood, and women are excluded from rabbinic authority and public religious roles.
- Modesty committees (vaad hatznius) in some communities police women's clothing, wigs, and behavior, with documented pressure campaigns against businesses and families. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- Marriage is near-universal and early; contraception typically requires rabbinic permission — reproductive decisions are institutionally mediated. PATTERN OBSERVED
- Get refusal (a husband's refusal to grant a religious divorce) is weaponized, niddah (the laws of ritual separation during and after menstruation) is supervised, and LGBTQ members face expulsion or conversion-therapy referral. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Sources for this section: 3 4 6 7 21

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?

Gender segregation is strict from childhood, and women are excluded from rabbinic authority and public religious roles.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

2	5	23
CODIFIED	DOCUMENTED	CULTURAL

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

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

Each carries an evidence grade for this tradition.

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.

This section applies thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research to institutions, arranged 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.

For a baal teshuva (a person who newly adopts Orthodox observance), a whole life appears at once: meals, teachers, clothes, purpose, matches, structure, certainty. It is genuinely miraculous and it is the hook.

What it asks of you: You were given an entire world. Ask what the deposit was.

1 · Love Bombing

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

How it shows here

- Baalei teshuva and converts may be welcomed with Shabbos (Sabbath) meals, matchmaking help, housing support, study partners, Hebrew names, rabbis, community families, and the intoxicating feeling of entering a total world.
- Hasidic or ultra-Orthodox spaces can offer immediate structure: what to wear, what to eat, how to speak, who to marry, what to read, how to raise children.
- The newcomer receives warmth from a community whose totality is the hook. Once inside, leaving may mean losing friends, marriage prospects, schools, housing networks, and identity.

The strongest defense. Tight community is how Jewish tradition survived persecution.

The counter. Survival does not sanctify control. A bunker may protect people during war, but if it locks the door from the inside and calls escape betrayal, it has stopped being refuge and become captivity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The welcome described (Shabbos meals, matchmaking help, housing, study partners) is offered by families and community members informally, under no written rule.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- Orthodox and Hasidic communities may provide housing help, schooling, food, employment networks, matchmaking, childcare, holiday meals, and intense family-style support.
- For baalei teshuva, the generosity can feel miraculous: a ready-made life appears — clothes, meals, teachers, rabbis, Shabbos tables, marriage options, children's schools.
- But the same total community can make leaving materially devastating. Departure may mean losing housing, employment, schools, spouse, children's social world, family approval, and every friend.
- The gift is often not one thing. It is an entire ecosystem. That is precisely what makes it powerful.

The strongest defense. A close religious community naturally shares resources. That is not coercion.

The counter. Sharing becomes coercive when every resource is inside the same fence. If the community provides everything and leaving means losing everything, then generosity has become infrastructure for captivity. The cage does not need bars when the food, school, job, marriage, and language are all inside.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The help described (housing, schooling, food, childcare, employment networks) is given by families and neighbors as custom, and the obligation it creates is left unspoken; no rule or document sets it.

Stage 2 · Hook

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

The hook is the world to come, the merit of your children's learning, and the chain unbroken back to Sinai. It is also a retrieval that offers your own children back to you: come to the wedding, see your mother, if only.

What it asks of you: When the offer of return includes access to your children, it is not an invitation. It is a term sheet.

3 · Future Faking

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

How it shows here

- Orthodox and Hasidic communities future-fake through total continuity: marry properly, have many children, keep Shabbos, follow rabbinic authority, preserve the community, and you secure your place in the chain.
- The future is not merely personal salvation. It is children, grandchildren, yeshivas, dynasties, rebbes, neighborhoods, arranged marriages, and the preservation of a holy world against outside corruption.
- Baalei teshuva may be promised a complete life: clarity, marriage, family, modesty, purpose, Shabbos peace, community, holiness, and rescue from the emptiness of secular life.
- The price arrives after attachment: restricted education, controlled media, marriage expectations, gender roles, rabbinic control, communal surveillance, and enormous exit costs.
- The future is always "your children will thank you." If they do not, the system says they were corrupted by the outside.

The strongest defense. Strict observance preserves Torah life and protects children from assimilation.

The counter. Protection becomes future faking when adults are told to surrender autonomy for children who have not consented yet. If every present restriction is justified by imagined future holiness, then no one can challenge the cost until the cost has already been paid by another generation.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The promised future (continuity, the chain, dynasties, a complete life) is conveyed through teaching and communal expectation; no document records the promise or its price.

4 · Hoovering

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

How it shows here

- Someone who leaves Orthodox or Hasidic life may face immediate pressure from parents, rabbis, matchmakers, siblings, neighbors, teachers, and former friends.
- They may be told they are destroying their shidduch prospects, shaming the family, endangering siblings' marriages, harming children, or betraying generations of sacrifice.
- The system may use practical dependency to pull them back: housing, employment, schools, language, clothing, marriage, custody, and community access.
- Former members may be contacted before holidays or family events with lines like: "Just come for Shabbos," "Just speak to the rabbi," "Just don't throw everything away."
- A common hoovering line: "You're breaking the chain. Your ancestors died for this."

The strongest defense. Close-knit communities naturally try to prevent people from making choices they believe will harm them.

The counter. Concern becomes coercion when the entire ecosystem is weaponized. If leaving means losing family, marriage prospects, education support, livelihood, language, and your children's place in the world, then "come back" is not an invitation. It is a survival demand.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Retrieval operates through children, weddings, and parents, and leaves little documentation.

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.

Someone is always frummer (more religiously observant). Chumras (added stringencies) multiply; your hair covering, your child's school, your husband's hours are all measurable and all slightly insufficient.

What it asks of you: Stringency competition has no top. It was never meant to have one.

5 · Devaluation

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

How it shows here

- Orthodox and Hasidic communities can devalue the individual by making the community the total source of identity: clothing, language, education, marriage, food, media, neighborhood, gender roles, and family structure.
- A person who questions may be called off the derech, rebellious, corrupted, immodest, arrogant, influenced by goyish (non-Jewish) culture, or spiritually endangered.
- Women may be reduced to modesty, fertility, marriageability, and family reputation. Men may be reduced to study, observance, lineage, and communal status.
- Children are trained early to see outside life as spiritually empty or dangerous, making their own curiosity feel contaminated.
- The person's worth depends on compliance with a total world.

The strongest defense. Strict observance preserves holiness, family, and Jewish survival.

The counter. Holiness becomes devaluation when the individual is treated as raw material for communal continuity. If a person's body, education, marriage, clothing, speech, and questions are all managed for the group, then the community has not protected the soul. It has replaced it.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Devaluation runs through labels (off the derech, rebellious, corrupted) and expectations applied by family and neighbors; no ruling or policy prescribes it.

6 · Gaslighting

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

How it shows here

- A young person questions restrictions on education, media, clothing, marriage, gender roles, or rabbinic control, and is told they are influenced by the outside world.
- Someone who wants to leave is called off the derech, broken, rebellious, damaged, or spiritually endangered.
- A woman says modesty rules feel oppressive, and the answer becomes, "You do not understand holiness."
- A person asks why secular knowledge is restricted, and the system says, "The outside world is poison."
- Curiosity is treated as contamination.

The strongest defense. Insular communities protect their members from assimilation and harmful outside values.

The counter. Protection becomes gaslighting when information itself is treated as danger. If the community must restrict what people can read, ask, wear, study, or know in order to preserve belief, then belief is not being protected. It is being managed.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The responses described ("You do not understand holiness", "The outside world is poison") are said in conversation by parents, teachers and peers; none is set out in a rule or document.

7 · Double Bind

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

How it shows here

- A Hasidic teen is taught that the outside world is spiritually dead — and that their doubts prove the outside world has infected them. The doubt is evidence; the evidence is doubt.
- Baalei teshuva are told to ask their rav (rabbi) everything, then gently mocked or distrusted as 'not really one of us' for lacking the instincts they were told never to develop independently.
- A wife is told shalom bayit (household peace) is her sacred duty — reporting abuse shatters peace, enduring abuse preserves it. Peace is defined as her silence.

The strongest defense. Insularity preserved Torah life through centuries of persecution; asking rabbinic guidance is humility, not weakness.

The counter. A wall that kept enemies out is doing different work when it keeps the wounded in. When 'peace' is achievable only through the suffering person's silence, the community has purchased its calm with her captivity.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Only the entry's third example, shalom bayit (household peace) as a wife's duty, draws on halachic marriage law; the teen's doubts and the baal teshuva's treatment are conveyed by teaching and social response. The entry names no document that sets any of them out.

Stage 4 · Confuse

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

Report abuse and you are the danger to the community. Ask about education and you are attacking Torah. The person who names the problem becomes the problem, and the vaad calls it protection.

What it asks of you: Notice that concern for the community's welfare is invoked exclusively against the people telling the truth about it.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Moments of transcendent favor (a rebbe's gaze, a shirayim portion, a blessing at a tish) are distributed unpredictably across thousands of chasidim, each of whom will work years for the next one. Shirayim is food left from the rebbe's table, a tish is his festive table gathering, and chasidim are the followers of a rebbe.
- Matchmaking is the community's jackpot: family standing, observance, and donations feed a ranking nobody can read, and every household presses every lever because no one knows which one the shadchan (matchmaker) watches.
- A struggling member receives sudden warmth — a Shabbos invitation, a loan, the rav's attention — precisely when drift begins, then routine distance resumes. The rescue is real, and it is also the hook reset.

The strongest defense. A rebbe is one man among thousands; scarcity of attention is arithmetic, not strategy.

The counter. Arithmetic explains the scarcity; the system decides what scarcity buys. Where the scarce gaze is converted into the community's supreme currency — redeemable for marriage, standing, and self-worth — arithmetic has been minted into leverage.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Rebbe attention, matchmaking rankings and sudden invitations are distributed by custom and by individuals, and no rule sets who receives them.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

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

How it shows here

- Baalei teshuva may first be praised for becoming observant. Then the requirements intensify: stricter kashrut (kosher law), stricter modesty, approved rabbis, approved schools, approved spouse, approved media, approved neighborhood.
- A woman dresses modestly, then is told the skirt is still wrong, the wig is too attractive, the sleeves too short, the behavior too noticeable.
- A young person follows rules but asks questions. Now the issue is no longer observance but attitude, submission, humility, and not being "influenced."

The strongest defense. Strict communities preserve holiness through careful standards.

The counter. Holiness becomes a moving target when every visible compliance produces a more invisible test. First they regulate behavior; then they regulate intention; then they regulate curiosity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The rising requirements described (stricter kashrut, modesty, approved rabbis, schools and spouses) are set informally by rabbis, neighbors and school committees, with no published standard to meet.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

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

How it shows here

- Rules may be described as protective customs, binding halacha, family standards, community norms, or rabbinic guidance depending on enforceability.
- Outsiders are told women are honored; insiders may experience tight control over dress, education, marriage, fertility, and public presence.
- The outside world is sometimes described as dangerous, sometimes simply "not for us," allowing isolation without sounding extreme.

The strongest defense. Close communities naturally have layered customs, laws, and social norms.

The counter. Layering becomes strategic ambiguity when no one can tell which expectations are optional until they try refusing them. A norm that punishes refusal is not just a custom. It is a rule wearing softer clothes.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The ambiguity lies in how rules are labeled in conversation (custom, halacha, family standard, guidance); no published classification separates them.

11 · Projection

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

How it shows here

- Orthodox or Hasidic systems may accuse leavers of being corrupted by the outside world while using restricted education, media control, surveillance, and marriage pressure.
- A young person seeking secular education is called spiritually endangered, while the community's fear of knowledge is projected onto the student.
- Women may be accused of immodesty while male behavior is regulated by controlling female clothing and visibility.
- Someone off the derech may be accused of destroying the family, while family or community rejection destroys the person's support system.

The strongest defense. Insular communities protect holiness and continuity.

The counter. Protection becomes projection when curiosity is called corruption. If a community must restrict knowledge to preserve loyalty, the danger is not outside information. The danger is informed consent.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The accusations described (corruption, immodesty, destroying the family) are made in family and community speech, and no ruling requires them.

12 · DARVO

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

How it shows here

- A young person reports abuse, educational neglect, forced conformity, marriage pressure, or family control. The response may be denial, then accusations that the person is off the derech, corrupted, unstable, or influenced by outsiders.
- Abuse survivors may be pressured not to report to secular authorities because it could harm the community.
- A person seeking secular education or freedom may be accused of destroying family reputation or siblings' shidduch prospects.
- The community becomes the endangered victim; the individual seeking safety becomes the source of danger.
- Leaving is reframed as betrayal of parents, ancestors, Torah, children, and communal survival.

The strongest defense. Close communities fear outside misunderstanding and want to handle matters internally.

The counter. "Handling internally" becomes DARVO when the same community that produced the harm controls the narrative, the rabbinic approval, the marriage market, the schools, and the family pressure. A closed system cannot police itself by silencing the person it harmed.

EVIDENCE GRADE

DOCUMENTED Retaliation against a family that reported abuse, with boycott and attempted intimidation of witnesses, is recorded in the Weberman case in section 19, which is tagged to this technique. The wider pattern of denial and accusation (that the reporter is off the derech, corrupted or unstable) is social reaction in family and community speech, and no ruling prescribes it; the grade rests on the case. *(sourced)*

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

- Children are normalized from birth into total community: dress, food, language, school, modesty, gender roles, marriage expectations, rabbinic authority, media limits, and suspicion of outsiders.
- Restricted secular education, limited internet, arranged marriage systems, and gender separation become ordinary because there is little comparison point.
- Women may become desensitized to modesty rules that monitor hair, sleeves, skirts, voice, movement, fertility, and public presence.
- Men may become desensitized to communal pressure around study, family role, observance, and rabbinic approval.

The strongest defense. Insular communities preserve holiness, modesty, Torah life, and protection from assimilation.

The counter. If people are raised without meaningful exposure to alternatives, compliance is not proof of free commitment. Normalization is most powerful when the controlled world is the only world a child is allowed to know.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Normalization comes from childhood immersion in dress, school, language and media limits, enforced by custom; the entry cites no written rule on it.

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.

Housing, employment, schooling, credit, language and marriage all sit inside one boundary. There is no neutral outside, by design.

What it asks of you: Name one resource in your life that does not run through the community. That is the honest measure of what you could refuse.

14 · Isolation

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

How it shows here

- Orthodox and Hasidic communities can isolate structurally: separate schools, controlled media, Yiddish or Hebrew language environments, arranged marriage networks, modest clothing, kosher food systems, neighborhood concentration, and rabbinic authority.
- Children may grow up with limited secular education, limited internet access, limited contact with outsiders, and limited knowledge of alternative ways of living.
- Leaving can mean losing language, family, job networks, marriage prospects, children's school access, religious legitimacy, and social belonging.
- Outside society may be described as spiritually filthy, immoral, anti-Torah, dangerous, empty, or hostile.
- The isolation is not merely ideological. It is logistical. The community supplies the whole world, then makes the outside world difficult to enter.

The strongest defense. Insular Jewish communities preserve Torah, family, modesty, and continuity against assimilation.

The counter. Preservation becomes isolation when people are denied the tools needed to leave freely. If a person lacks education, money, secular literacy, outside relationships, and family support, then the community has not simply preserved identity. It has engineered dependency.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CODIFIED Published rabbinic proclamations on internet use, secular media, and specific publications. They cover only the information-control part of the entry; the structural isolation it mostly describes (schools, marriage networks, neighborhood) rests on custom. *(sourced)*

15 · Triangulation

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

How it shows here

- Orthodox and Hasidic communities triangulate through rabbis, parents, matchmakers, yeshivas, siblings, marriage prospects, children, neighbors, schools, and communal reputation.
- A young person who questions observance may be told they are hurting siblings' shidduch prospects, embarrassing parents, endangering children, and betraying ancestors.
- If someone wants secular education, they may be triangulated against the outside world: "The goyishe world will corrupt you," "Secular people have no values," "You will lose your soul."
- Women may be triangulated through family honor, modesty expectations, fertility, marriageability, and reputation.
- Men may be triangulated through study, rabbinic approval, lineage, and communal status.
- The person cannot simply leave a belief system; they risk disrupting a whole marriage-market and family-status machine.

The strongest defense. Close communities naturally care about family reputation, marriage, and children.

The counter. Care becomes triangulation when a person is made responsible for everyone else's social survival. If your clothing, education, doubts, or exit are treated as threats to siblings, parents, children, and future marriages, then the community has turned your life into communal property.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The entry describes pressure applied through relatives, matchmakers and rabbis; it cites no published ruling that sets out this mediation, so its basis is custom.

Stage 6 · Extract

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

The harvest takes these forms: tuition, kosher premiums and ritual costs that require communal charity to survive; state stipends that sustain a full-time-study economy; gemachs that create dependency alongside genuine aid; boys leaving school without English or arithmetic; modesty committees; and mesirah, which converts calling the police into a communal offense.

What it asks of you: The education deficit is the mechanism that makes every other cost on this page collectible. Without it, none of them would hold.

16 · Flying Monkeys

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

How it shows here

- A young person who becomes less observant may be approached by parents, siblings, rabbis, teachers, matchmakers, neighbors, and school authorities.
- They may be told they are harming siblings' shidduch prospects, embarrassing parents, endangering children, and betraying generations.
- If someone leaves, community members may pressure them through housing, employment, schools, custody, marriage prospects, and reputation.
- Former friends may become informants: who the person sees, what they wear, whether they use the internet, whether they eat non-kosher, whether they date outside.

The strongest defense. Close communities naturally intervene when someone's choices affect family and children.

The counter. Intervention becomes FLYING MONKEY pressure when the entire ecosystem is mobilized against one person's autonomy. If rabbis, parents, schools, matchmakers, neighbors, and marriage markets all speak with one voice, the person is not being counseled. They are being cornered.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Shidduch and school-admission consequences are administered by families and community brokers, never by instruction; no document is named.

17 · Smear Campaign

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

How it shows here

- Leavers may be labeled off the derech, corrupted, unstable, rebellious, immodest, mentally ill, attention-seeking, or damaged by outside influence.
- A person seeking secular education may be smeared as abandoning Torah.
- Women resisting marriage or modesty pressure may be described as selfish or dangerous to family reputation.
- Abuse survivors may be accused of harming shidduch prospects, embarrassing the community, or involving outsiders.

The strongest defense. Insular communities worry about reputation because it affects families, children, and marriage prospects.

The counter. Reputation becomes smear when the person naming harm is treated as more dangerous than the harm itself. If protecting shidduchim matters more than protecting victims, the community has made image into an idol.

EVIDENCE GRADE

DOCUMENTED The labels described (off the derech, unstable, immodest, attention-seeking) are applied through gossip and family talk, and no ruling prescribes them. The retaliation against the Weberman reporting family in section 19, which is tagged to this technique, is recorded in court records, and the grade rests on that case. *(sourced)*

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

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

How it shows here

- Abuse or coercion may be handled through rabbis and internal systems rather than outside authorities.
- Young people asking about education, marriage pressure, modesty rules, or family control may be dismissed as confused, corrupted, or immature.
- A person who leaves may be met with silence, exclusion, or refusal to discuss anything except return.
- Families may stonewall with shame: no explanation, no dialogue, just withdrawal of warmth, access, money, or social standing.

The strongest defense. Close communities handle sensitive matters internally to preserve modesty and communal stability.

The counter. Internal handling becomes stonewalling when the same system controls reputation, marriage prospects, schools, and rabbinic approval. If the victim cannot reach accountability without losing the community, silence has become infrastructure.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **CODIFIED** Mesirah as an explicit prohibition on reporting to secular authorities, in rabbinic rulings — and contested by other rabbinic rulings. *(sourced)*

19 · Manufactured Consent

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

How it shows here

- Children raised in insular communities "choose" observance after being given limited secular education, limited outside exposure, and few exit tools.
- Marriage choices appear voluntary inside tightly controlled matchmaking, family reputation, rabbinic guidance, and gender expectations.
- Women "choose" modesty under constant social inspection of clothing, hair, voice, fertility, and family status.
- A person "chooses" to stay because leaving may cost language, family, livelihood, custody, education, and belonging.

The strongest defense. Strict communities raise children in their values, as all communities do.

The counter. Raising children in values becomes manufactured consent when alternatives are hidden and exit is structurally punished. A choice made without education, outside support, or realistic escape is not full consent. It is adaptation.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** Education deficits established by state investigation mean adult withdrawal is materially constrained by a decision made in childhood. *(sourced)*

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- Insular communities can create intense bonds by making the community the entire world: family, school, marriage, language, food, housing, employment, ritual, and identity.
- The outside world is framed as dangerous, empty, or corrupt; the community then becomes the only safe shelter.
- A person who doubts is shamed or feared over, then loved again when they return to observance.
- Leaving may mean losing everyone, so even painful belonging feels safer than freedom.

The strongest defense. Close communities provide safety, continuity, family, and holiness.

The counter. Safety becomes TRAUMA BONDING when the outside is made terrifying and the inside is made indispensable. If harm inside the community is endured because the world outside has been made unlivable, belonging has become captivity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The bond described (the community as family, school, work and identity, with the outside framed as dangerous) is a product of daily life and belonging; no rule or record establishes it.

21 · Learned Helplessness

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

How it shows here

- A person raised inside the community may lack secular education, outside contacts, financial independence, language tools, or legal knowledge.
- They may try questioning and face shame, rabbinic pressure, family panic, marriage consequences, or school threats.
- Women may feel unable to leave because of children, custody, money, reputation, and family exile.
- The person learns that exit is technically possible but practically devastating.

The strongest defense. Insular communities provide complete support systems and strong values.

The counter. A complete support system becomes LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when leaving means losing everything needed to survive. If the community provides the world and blocks the exits to the world, dependence is engineered.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** Secular education deficits in boys' yeshivas established by state investigations. *(sourced)*

22 · Benevolent Control

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

How it shows here

- Insular education, strict modesty, media restriction, matchmaking, rabbinic guidance, and neighborhood concentration are framed as protection from the outside world.
- Children are raised inside a total environment because the community says it is preserving holiness.
- Women may be controlled through modesty and family roles described as dignity.
- Leaving is discouraged because the outside world is portrayed as spiritually dangerous and morally empty.

The strongest defense. Insular communities protect Torah life, modesty, children, and continuity.

The counter. Protection becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when people are denied the tools to leave. If education, information, marriage, income, and belonging are all controlled "for your good," care has become captivity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Modesty committees operate without formal institutional mandate, which is precisely what makes them unattributable; no document is named.

23 · Infantilization

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

How it shows here

- Adults may remain under rabbinic, family, and communal authority for marriage, education, dress, media, fertility, and livelihood.
- Women may be treated as needing modesty regulation for communal holiness.
- Men may be managed through study expectations, rabbinic approval, and family role.
- Limited secular education can produce dependence that is then used as proof the outside world is unsafe.

The strongest defense. Strict communities preserve holiness through guidance and boundaries.

The counter. Boundaries become INFANTILIZATION when adults are not given the knowledge or freedom required for adult choice. If the community keeps people dependent and then calls dependence holiness, it has manufactured immaturity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The dependence described is produced by limited schooling and by custom on rabbinic, family and communal approval; no rule sets adult status.

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 is shaped from childhood through clothing, language, schooling, kosher systems, gender roles, marriage markets, rabbinic authority, modesty, holidays, and neighborhood life.
- The person may have little private self outside communal categories: good girl, yeshiva boy, modest wife, learned man, proper family, eligible match.
- Leaving can feel like annihilation because the community supplies not just belief but vocabulary, food, marriage, education, friendship, and future.
- Curiosity itself may become frightening because it threatens the whole identity structure.
- The person may not know who they are apart from the role assigned.

The strongest defense. Insular communities preserve Torah identity and protect against assimilation.

The counter. Preservation becomes IDENTITY EROSION when the community supplies the entire self and punishes alternatives. If a person cannot imagine themselves outside the system, that is not merely strong identity. It is identity captivity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Identity fused to community through dress, language, schooling, and marriage networks — comprehensive, and nowhere mandated in writing; no document is named.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

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

How it shows here

- Abuse may be bypassed through avoiding lashon hara (harmful speech about others), protecting shidduchim, preserving family honor, or handling matters internally.
- Personal distress may be reframed as yetzer hara (the evil inclination), outside influence, or lack of emunah (faith).
- Women's suffering may be spiritualized as modesty, marriage duty, or family sacrifice.
- Questions about education, marriage, or control may be answered with Torah obedience.

- Leaving pain is minimized as corruption by the outside world.

The strongest defense. Communities protect modest speech, family stability, and Torah values.

The counter. Modesty becomes SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when it hides harm. If avoiding bad speech matters more than stopping bad actions, spiritual speech rules have become a hiding place.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The spiritual language described (lashon hara, shidduchim, family honor, yetzer hara, emunah) is used in advice and conversation; no text in the entry directs it.

26 · Financial Control

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

How it shows here

- Financial control can be structural: kosher food, large families, yeshiva tuition, modest clothing, neighborhood costs, wedding expectations, charity obligations, and dependence on community employment networks.
- Leaving may threaten livelihood, housing, school access, family financial support, and marriage prospects.
- Limited secular education can increase dependence on internal economies.

- Charitable systems may help members while also keeping them inside rabbinic and communal authority.

The strongest defense. Close communities support one another materially and preserve a complete way of life.

The counter. Support becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when the entire economy is inside the fence. If leaving means losing income, education, housing, school, marriage networks, and family support, generosity has become infrastructure for captivity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The costs described (tuition, kosher food, modest clothing, wedding and charity obligations) are borne by custom and communal expectation; the entry cites no requirement and no accounts. Public funding of the schools is recorded separately in sections 8 and 9.

Stage 7 · Discard

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

This stage carries the highest exit costs in this codex: the person loses spouse, children (in custody battles the community funds), parents, siblings, housing and employment, and has no secular credentials to fall back on.

What it asks of you: This is not estrangement. It is a system with documented enforcement.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Insular communities may manufacture crisis around internet access, secular education, immodesty, dating, leaving observance, and outside influence.

- A young person's curiosity becomes a crisis for siblings' shidduchim, family honor, and children's future.
- Leaving becomes not a personal decision but an emergency threatening the family system.
- Outside society is framed as spiritually catastrophic.

The strongest defense. Strict communities protect members from assimilation and harmful secular influence.

The counter. Protection becomes MANUFACTURED CRISIS when information itself is treated as contamination. If the community must make curiosity feel catastrophic, it is not protecting holiness. It is protecting control.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The entry describes urgency framed in family and community talk around the internet, secular education, immodesty and leaving; the court records of custody cases (sections 3 and 15) bear on technique 28, not on the framing described here.

28 · Discard

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

How it shows here

- Someone who goes off the derech may lose family warmth, school access, marriage prospects, employment networks, housing help, and community reputation.

- A woman who resists modesty or marriage expectations may be treated as dangerous to siblings' shidduchim.
- A young person seeking secular education may be cast as corrupted.
- Discard can be total because the community supplies the entire world.

The strongest defense. Strict communities try to preserve Torah life and protect children.

The counter. Preservation becomes DISCARD when the person who leaves is treated as contamination. If love collapses because someone changes clothes, beliefs, education, or marriage path, the community loved the role more than the person.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> **DOCUMENTED** Custody proceedings in which community funds supported the observant parent, in court records. The grade rests on that custody half; the loss of warmth, school access and marriage prospects described in the bullets is social practice. *(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 God.

The community's birth rate makes departure demographically invisible; your absence is absorbed within a year. And the authority is Torah, transmitted through a rebbe whose position is inherited and whose rulings are not appealable.

What it asks of you: Ask what process exists for a member to establish that a rebbe was wrong. The absence of an answer is the finding.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A child who leaves observance may be emotionally replaced by siblings who remain compliant.
- A questioning student is replaced by one who fits yeshiva expectations.

- A woman resisting modesty or marriage norms is contrasted with more obedient women.
- Marriage markets and schools quietly move on, preserving the system by prioritizing compliant families.

The strongest defense. Communities must continue supporting those who remain committed.

The counter. Support becomes REPLACEMENT when the noncompliant person is erased to protect the system. If the family or community transfers pride to the obedient child and shame to the free one, love has become role-based.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The replacement described (siblings, students and families moved into the vacated place) happens informally in families, schools and the marriage market; no rule directs it.

30 · Plausible Deniability

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

How it shows here

- Communities may say members freely choose observance, while children are raised with limited outside exposure, restricted education, controlled media, and intense marriage/social dependency.
- Modesty rules are framed as dignity, not control, but women who resist may lose status, marriage prospects, or family approval.

- Rabbis may not officially order family rejection, but family, schools, matchmakers, and neighbors enforce consequences.
- A person who leaves may be called corrupted by the outside world, while the community denies shunning.
- Abuse may be handled internally "to protect the community," allowing leaders to deny cover-up.

The strongest defense. We preserve holiness and protect children. People can leave if they choose. Internal handling protects modesty and community stability.

The counter. Protection becomes PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY when alternatives are hidden until adulthood. A technical ability to leave is not freedom if leaving costs language, family, income, children, education, and belonging. Internal handling is not accountability when the same community controls reputation, marriage prospects, and social survival.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Authority rests in dynastic rebbes whose rulings have no appeal structure and no published procedure.

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?

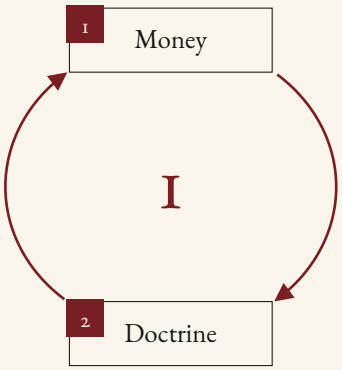
13 The loops

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 where its fact is recorded.

1 · Money to Doctrine to Money



Tuition, ritual costs, and communal aid circulate inside one boundary, and standing determines access at every point.

How it runs.

1. Families pay tuition, kosher premiums, ritual costs and wedding costs (sections 1 and 9).
2. Those costs are large enough to entrench dependence on communal aid and donors (section 9, Follow the money).
3. Gemachs and charity networks supply that aid, and it is conditioned on standing (section 9).
4. Standing is set by conformity, and shidduch prospects and school admissions enforce it (sections 7 and 15).
5. Conformity keeps the family inside the same schools and institutions, and the paying continues.

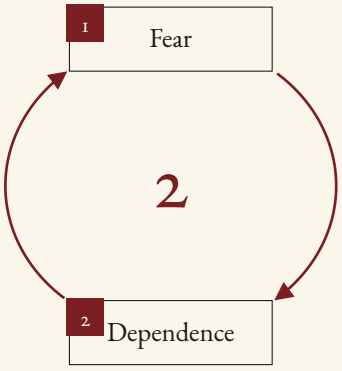
Techniques that feed it. 2 · Weaponized Generosity, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. The costs create the need for aid, the aid depends on standing, and standing depends on conformity. The community that charges the family also decides whether it can afford to disagree.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where aid does not depend on standing. Gemach and charity administrators could refuse to let communal standing determine whether a family eats (section 18). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The pipeline in section 9, School tuition to family leverage, records that fee schedules are disclosed and that the conduct conditions attached to enrolment are not.

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



Fear of losing everything is not taught abstractly — it is demonstrated, publicly, whenever someone leaves.

How it runs.

1. A member leaves or openly questions, and can lose spouse, children, parents, siblings, housing and employment (section 15).
2. The loss is visible to the community, and the person is no longer spoken of (section 2).
3. Remaining members learn that exit is technically possible but practically devastating (technique 21).
4. Limited secular education leaves many without marketable skills (sections 1 and 15), which deepens dependence.
5. Deeper dependence makes the next exit look more costly, and the fear renews.

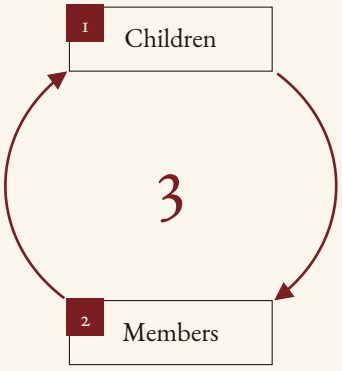
Techniques that feed it. 4 · Hoovering, 20 · Trauma Bonding, 21 · Learned Helplessness, 28 · Discard.

Why it closes. Each exit that is punished shows the next member what an exit costs. The fear of that cost keeps members inside, where they depend on the community more.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where leavers have somewhere to go and where families keep contact. Footsteps offers educational and career help (section 24), and the closing of section 23 asks that a child be able to leave without losing his mother. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In section 2, nobody says the cousin's son's name at the table, and Chava thinks of him at odd moments and then stops.

3 · Children to Members to Children



The education deficit is the loop's engine: it produces adults who cannot leave, who enroll their sons in the same schools.

How it runs.

1. Boys enter religious school from age 3, gender-segregated, with curriculum, dress and language determined for them (section 11).
2. State investigations found schools receiving public funds not teaching basic English and mathematics (sections 8 and 14).
3. A man who cannot fill out a job application in English is not choosing to stay (section 10).
4. Arranged introductions begin at 18–20, and family reputation determines match quality (section 11).
5. He marries inside the community and enrolls his sons in the same schools.

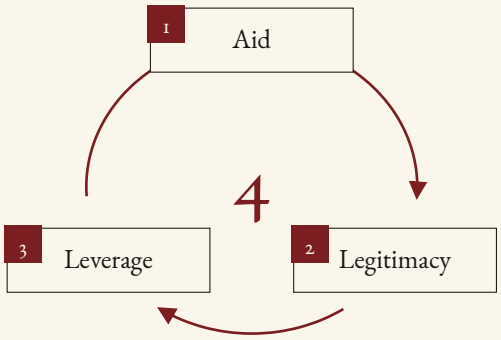
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 21 · Learned Helplessness, 23 · Infantilization.

Why it closes. The schooling produces adults who cannot leave, and those adults choose the same schooling for their own children.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the curriculum changes. State education authorities can compel an answer (section 8), and teachers and school administrators could refuse to teach or enforce a curriculum that leaves a child unable to fill out a job application (section 18). Section 20 says verified secular-education compliance would revise a core finding. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In section 2, Yossi is thirteen, reads Hebrew beautifully, cannot do long division and does not know what a continent is.

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



Bloc votes buy stipends and curriculum exemption; the exemption sustains the deficit that sustains the bloc.

How it runs.

1. Haredi political parties deliver bloc votes (section 7).
2. In Israel, coalition agreements convert them into state stipends for full-time study, draft exemptions and curriculum autonomy (sections 8 and 9).
3. In New York, political organization has secured regulatory autonomy over yeshiva curricula while receiving public funding (section 16).
4. The autonomy leaves an education deficit (sections 8 and 10).
5. The deficit keeps men in the study economy and the community, which supplies the next bloc.

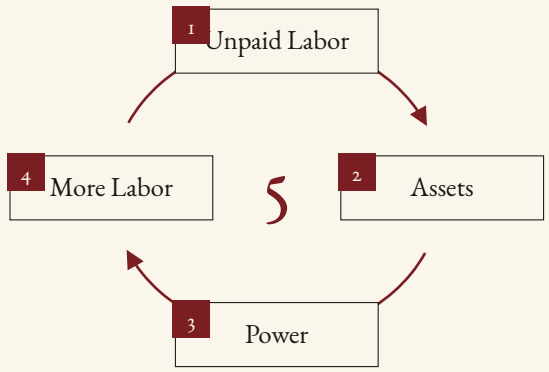
Techniques that feed it. 21 · Learned Helplessness, 22 · Benevolent Control, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. Votes are exchanged for the conditions, funding and exemptions, that keep the community dependent and therefore voting as a bloc.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where courts and voters act. In 2024 Israel's High Court ruled that there was no legal basis for the blanket exemption and cut funding to yeshivas whose students do not comply (sections 8 and 19). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The Israel Democracy Institute found irregular funding and weakened parliamentary oversight in the 2025 budget (section 8).

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



Community labor builds institutions held by dynastic courts, and succession is litigated as inheritance.

How it runs.

1. Members fund schools and institutions through tuition, ritual costs and giving (section 9).
2. Dynastic courts hold institutions, real estate, schools, and succession as inheritable property (section 7).
3. The succession is settled by bloodline and, where necessary, by succession fights, which are litigated (sections 1 and 9).
4. Whoever inherits controls the schools, housing and marriage networks that members' lives depend on (section 7).
5. Members keep serving the institutions, because their lives depend on them.

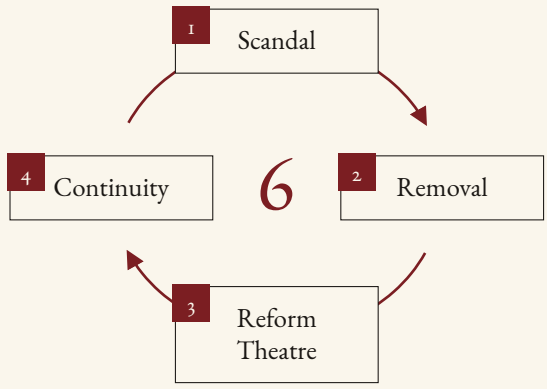
Techniques that feed it. 22 · Benevolent Control, 26 · Financial Control, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The labor and money come from members, the assets are held as the property of a dynasty, and no procedure exists to remove a rebbe (section 7).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the institutions' assets and decisions become accountable to members. Court proceedings over succession have already exposed the property nature of authority (section 9). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Satmar has been split since 2006 between two brothers, each leading a faction (sections 6 and 7).

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



An abuser is convicted, the community rallies to him, and the rule that a rabbi must be consulted first is not recorded as changed.

How it runs.

1. Abuse is reported to outside authorities despite mesirah norms (sections 8 and 19).
2. The reporting family faces boycott and pressure, and supporters of the accused fill the courtroom (section 5).
3. Nechemya Weberman is convicted on 59 counts in 2012 (section 8).
4. Community leaders later seek clemency for him (sections 8 and 19).
5. Several rabbis rule that reporting with a substantial basis is not mesirah, yet Agudath Israel's rabbinical board still requires consulting a rabbi first (section 19).

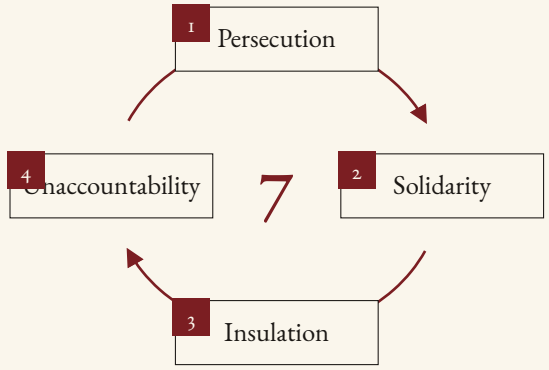
Techniques that feed it. 12 · DARVO, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 17 · Smear Campaign, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling.

Why it closes. A conviction ends one case and leaves the norms in place. The community's response is directed at the family that reported.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the rabbis who permit reporting let the ruling become practice (section 18), and where Agudath Israel's rabbinical board changes its requirement (section 8). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Weberman's 103-year sentence was cut to 50 and, in January 2026, to 18 years after he admitted guilt (sections 5 and 19).

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



The Holocaust was real, and the insulation built in response now works as a barrier to outside scrutiny.

How it runs.

1. The Holocaust destroyed the European heartland (section 5).
2. Reconstruction followed an explicit mandate to rebuild the population and insulate it from the outside world (section 5).
3. The rebuilt communities placed schools, housing, employment and marriage inside one boundary (section 5).
4. The boundary now prevents departure (section 10), and the strongest objection recorded in section 3 is that outsiders cannot see what the community gives.
5. With outside scrutiny excluded, no procedure exists to remove a rebbe or appeal a ruling (section 7).

Techniques that feed it. 11 · Projection, 14 · Isolation, 22 · Benevolent Control, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The historical reason for insulation is real, the insulation removes outside checks, and without checks the reason is never tested against present conditions.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the reason is tested, as section 10 does, and where bodies with authority act, such as the courts and state education authorities (section 8). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 10 records that the NYPD is not a blood-libel tribunal, and that internal rulings have said abuse reporting is not mesirah while social enforcement continued.

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?

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
Nobody is forced to stay. Anyone may leave.	Boys leave school without English or arithmetic, and community funds appear on one side of custody cases.	GOVERNMENT REPORT / COURT RECORD
Our education is excellent.	State investigations found schools receiving public funds not teaching basic English and mathematics.	GOVERNMENT REPORT
Mesirah does not apply to abuse.	Prominent rabbis have ruled exactly that, and families who called the police still lost their standing.	COURT RECORD

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. Convictions were obtained by outside prosecutors while the reporting families were driven out.

Who holds the chair now. The chair is held by dynastic courts, school admissions committees, and the political parties that hold the exemption.

Prediction. The next case will be prosecuted externally, the community will fund the defense, and the curriculum will not change.

Words used here

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS INSIDE	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Mesirah	It is the prohibition on reporting a Jew to secular authorities.	Originating as protection against genuinely hostile states, it functions now as a barrier to reporting crimes to police. Several major authorities have publicly limited it for abuse — which is exactly why the limitation is citable.	'Do not call the police.'
Chillul Hashem	It means the desecration of God's name, which is bringing disgrace on the community.	It makes the disclosure of a wrong a greater wrong than the wrong itself.	'People finding out is worse than what happened.'
Shanda / a shame on the family	It means public disgrace attaching to a family.	It is the enforcement engine of the marriage market, and the sanction lands on siblings and cousins who did nothing.	'Your family's children will not marry.'
Da'as Torah	It means the authoritative judgment of great rabbis on any matter.	It extends religious authority to questions — medical, financial, legal — where no religious expertise is claimed or held.	'Ask him instead of the doctor.'

Sources for this section: [9]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

15 Cost & cover

BEFORE YOU READ

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

What leaving costs

- Leaving carries among the highest exit costs of any Western religious community. Leavers routinely lose their spouse, their children (in custody battles where the community funds the observant parent), their parents, their siblings and their employment, and because they were denied a secular education, they often lack marketable skills. **INVESTIGATIVE REPORT / COURT RECORD** · documented custody cases; org: Footsteps
- Abuse reporting to police has historically been framed as mesirah (informing), and whistleblower families have been expelled. **COURT RECORD / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Leaving costs a person their family, spouse and children.	Yes, this cost is documented.	Divorce and custody proceedings occur in which the community funds the observant parent, and leavers report shunning that is total.	“Family estrangement is their own doing.”

Leaving costs a person their employment and housing.	Yes, this cost is documented.	Jobs, housing and credit run through the community, and the leaver has no secular credentials to fall back on.	“Nobody fired them for leaving.”
Leaving is made harder by an education deficit.	Yes, this cost is documented.	Limited secular schooling makes independent life materially difficult.	“Our education is excellent — in Torah.”
Leaving is made harder by limits in language and social skills.	Yes, this cost is documented.	A Yiddish-first upbringing and cultural insulation compound isolation on exit.	“That's heritage, not control.”

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Low in part	Rabbinic bans, modesty rulings, and internet prohibitions are published proclamations — real receipts.
Informal enforcement	High	Shidduch prospects, school admissions, and business boycotts do the enforcing.
Leadership distance	High	Each dynasty and each school disclaims the others; no central Haredi authority exists.
Doctrinal ambiguity	Medium	Halachic sourcing lets any specific practice be presented as one authority's stringency.
Cultural outsourcing	High	Custody outcomes and estrangement are attributed to family dynamics rather than to communal funding and pressure.
Volunteer enforcement	High	Neighbors, mothers-in-law, and modesty committees enforce; no rebbe issues an order.

Sacred secrecy	Low	Mesirah is documented as an explicit prohibition on external reporting. COURT RECORD
Exit cost denial	High	The claim 'Anyone can leave' comes from a community that supplied every relationship, credential, and dollar.

Sources for this section: [7]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page records one of the highest exit costs of any Western religious community. People who leave can lose their spouse, their children (in custody fights where community funds appear on one side), their parents, their siblings and their work. And because secular education was withheld, many leave without marketable skills. If you are thinking about leaving, organizations like Footsteps exist because thousands have done it before you. If you are staying, what would you want for your own child if they chose to go?

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

- The beneficiaries are dynastic courts, whose rebbes control institutions, real estate and succession; communal machers, who broker housing, matches and jobs; and political blocs delivering votes wholesale in exchange for state funding and regulatory autonomy (education exemptions in New York and Israel). INVESTIGATIVE REPORT / GOVERNMENT REPORT

Money out, leverage back

- Haredi political parties in Israel convert bloc votes into state stipends for full-time study, draft exemptions, and exemption from education standards — public money sustaining the exact curriculum deficit that makes leaving impossible. OFFICIAL POLICY / GOVERNMENT REPORT
- In New York, political organization has secured regulatory autonomy over yeshiva curricula while receiving substantial public funding; state investigations found many schools failing to provide basic secular instruction. GOVERNMENT REPORT
- Communal charity networks (gemachs, housing help) are genuine mutual aid and simultaneously a dependency web: aid flows through standing, and standing flows through conformity. PATTERN OBSERVED

Who pays

- Leavers (OTD) pay: they lose family, children, housing, employment and community in a single step.
- Women pay through modesty policing, get refusal (a husband's refusal to grant a religious divorce) and reproductive supervision.
- Abuse survivors pay: they are silenced by mesirah norms and communal retaliation.
- Boys denied secular education pay a lifelong economic penalty imposed before consent.
- LGBTQ community members pay through expulsion or referral to conversion practices (section 11).
- Israeli and New York taxpayers pay, in the narrow sense that public funds sustain the education deficits at issue.

Boys denied secular education pay a lifelong economic penalty imposed before consent.

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 recorded in section 15 do not fall evenly. The table names who carries the most, how the weight lands on them, and what makes it worse. Each row draws on material recorded earlier on this page.

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
People who leave (OTD)	They lose spouse, children, parents, housing, employment and credentials in one step.	This compounds where custody is contested and the community funds one side.
Women	They face modesty policing, get refusal and reproductive decisions mediated rabbinically.	It compounds with six or more children and no secular education or independent income.
Boys denied secular education	They bear a permanent economic penalty imposed before consent.	It compounds into a marriage and family they cannot support independently.

Abuse survivors	They face mesirah pressure and communal retaliation against the reporting family.	It compounds where the accused's family controls school admissions.
LGBTQ community members	They face expulsion or referral to conversion practices.	It compounds for adolescents in a total community with no outside contact.

From The Women's Codex

- *Divorce and religious captivity* — An agunah (a woman whose husband refuses to grant her a get, the religious divorce) is held in the marriage. Rabbinic courts hold the key to a get and have overwhelmingly declined to make its use mandatory.

From The Children's Codex

- *Education* — In the New York yeshiva investigation of 2015–2023, after years of political resistance, the city found 18 of the 39 Hasidic boys' yeshivas it examined not substantially equivalent to public schooling, and 14 of those findings still need the state's affirmation [4]. The length of the delay is a finding in its own right.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

People who leave (OTD) come first in the table, then women under modesty policing, get refusal and rabbinically mediated reproductive decisions, often with many children, no secular education and no independent income. The question for a reader inside is the one the page's forefront poses: can a child in your community read, and tell someone if something is wrong? If not, who decided that?

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.

Much of the community's daily enforcement is carried out by people who hold no office: teachers, administrators, matchmakers, charity administrators and the rabbis who have ruled that reporting is permitted. The table sets out what each does, what each sees, what each is asked to do and where each could refuse.

ROLE	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Melamdim (teachers of young boys) and yeshiva teachers	They teach boys for ten hours a day.	They see which children cannot read, and which are being hurt.	They are asked to keep it inside.	They could refuse to teach a curriculum that leaves a child unable to fill out a job application.
School administrators	They control admissions, and therefore control families.	They see that admission is used to enforce parental conformity.	They are asked to maintain standards.	They could refuse to reject a child because of a parent's hair covering or a sibling's yeshiva.
Shadchanim (matchmakers)	They operate the marriage market.	They see how a whole family's reputation prices a daughter's future.	They are asked to protect the community's standards.	They could refuse to transmit a report about a family's conformity as though it were relevant.
Gemach and charity administrators	They distribute real, needed aid.	They see how standing determines access.	They are asked to exercise discretion.	They could refuse to let communal standing determine whether a family eats.
Rabbis who have ruled that reporting is permitted	They hold the single most important position in this profile.	They see that their ruling is ignored socially.	They are asked to be quiet about it.	They could refuse to let the ruling stay theoretical.

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 does, what each sees, what each is asked to do and where each 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.

Prosecution despite mesirah pressure

WHEN: 2012

WHAT: An unlicensed counselor in a Hasidic community was convicted of sexually abusing a teenage girl. The complainant's family faced community retaliation and

boycott for reporting to secular authorities, and supporters of the accused attempted to intimidate witnesses.

RECORD: The record is New York State court records.

OUTCOME: Conviction and a 103-year sentence, later cut to 50. Several prominent rabbis have since ruled that reporting abuse with a substantial basis is not mesirah — though Agudath Israel's rabbinical board still requires consulting a rabbi first — and in 2021–22 community leaders sought his clemency. In January 2026 a Brooklyn judge resentenced him to 18 years after he admitted guilt and apologised to the victim.

TACTICS: 12 · DARVO, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 17 · Smear Campaign, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

New York yeshiva education investigations

WHEN: 2015–present

WHAT: State and city investigations examined whether Hasidic boys' schools receiving public funding provided the substantially equivalent secular instruction required by law. Multiple schools were found not to provide substantially equivalent instruction.

RECORD: The record is the findings of the New York City and State Education Departments.

OUTCOME: The outcome was prolonged political resistance and litigation. The education deficit is the mechanism that makes every other exit cost enforceable.

TACTICS: 14 · Isolation, 21 · Learned Helplessness

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

The draft exemption ends in court (Israel, 2024)

WHEN: 2024

WHAT: For decades Haredi yeshiva students were exempt from military service that other Jewish Israelis must perform [5].

RECORD: High Court of Justice, 25 June 2024 (unanimous) [5]

OUTCOME: The court ruled there was no legal basis for the blanket exemption, ordered the army to draft Haredi men, and cut funding to yeshivas whose students do not comply [5].

TACTICS: 26 · Financial Control

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Sources for this section: [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

20 Precedent

BEFORE YOU READ

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

It has been broken before

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHAT IT COST
Rabbis issued rulings that reporting abuse is not mesirah.	It was done by prominent poskim, publicly.	The period is 2000s–present.	The cost was sustained communal resistance.
A conviction was obtained despite organized witness intimidation.	It was done by a teenage complainant and her family.	The year was 2012.	The cost was boycott and exile from their community.
State education investigations forced the curriculum question into public view.	It was done by former students and advocacy organizations.	The period is 2015–2023, and continuing at the state level.	The cost was political attack.
Support organizations were built for people leaving, and for those staying.	It was done by former members who built them.	The period is 2003–present.	The cost was loss of their standing in the community.

What would change this page

Verified secular-education compliance in the investigated schools, and one documented case of a community protecting a family that reported abuse externally, would each revise a core finding here.

Sources for this section: 3 4 6 7

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

- **Malkie Schwartz.** Schwartz founded Footsteps in December 2003 to help people leaving ultra-Orthodox life; it has served nearly 3,000

people [7].

- **Naftuli Moster.** Moster founded Young Advocates for a Fair Education (YAFFED), which campaigns for secular education in Hasidic yeshivas [12].
- **The young woman who testified against Nechemya Weberman.** Her case led to his conviction on 59 counts [1].
- **Rabbis who permit reporting abuse.** They permit it where there is a substantial basis, against the rule that a rabbi must be asked first; Rabbi Elyashiv is the rabbi named in the source [6].

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.

New York State

APEX: The apex is the dynastic courts: Satmar in Williamsburg and Kiryas Joel, and Ger, Bobov and others in Borough Park.

LAW: The law sets substantial-equivalency requirements for private schools, and the state education department's enforcement has been contested politically and litigated for a decade.

DOCUMENTED: The city's investigation found 2 of 28 examined yeshivas meeting the standard (2019); its 2023 determinations found 18 of 39 not substantially equivalent, 14 of them awaiting state affirmation [4].

EXIT: Exit costs are among the highest in this codex, because language, education, employment, housing and family are all inside the community.

REGULATOR: The regulators are the NY State Education Department on substantial equivalency, ACS (the Administration for Children's Services) on child welfare, and the courts on custody.

TELL: The tell is the gap between a legal standard existing and a legal standard being enforced, measured in decades and in individual children's literacy.

Israel

APEX: The apex is the dynastic courts plus the Haredi political parties, which hold parliamentary leverage.

LAW: The core curriculum requirement in Haredi schools has been repeatedly negotiated in coalition agreements. Military exemption arrangements have been repeatedly litigated at the High Court.

DOCUMENTED: The record includes High Court rulings on exemption and on curriculum funding, and state comptroller reports on educational provision.

EXIT: Exit costs are very high, and a substantial and organised network of leavers now exists and is itself documented.

REGULATOR: The regulators are the High Court of Justice, the most consequential venue; the Ministry of Education; and the State Comptroller.

TELL: Where a community holds the balance of parliamentary power, the regulator becomes a coalition agreement. That is a different accountability problem from anywhere else in this volume.

Sources for this section: [3] [4] [5]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers New York State and Israel. 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

If Torah education is complete, why does a graduate need a community-funded charity to survive economically at thirty?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If an education is complete, its graduates should be able to support themselves. The question asks why so many need charity at thirty.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The say-do table sets "Our education is excellent" beside state investigations that found schools receiving public funds not teaching basic English and mathematics. The money section records gemachs that "also create dependency webs."

QUESTION 2 OF 6

Prominent rabbis have ruled that reporting abuse is not mesirah. Name one family in your community that reported and did not pay for it.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If rabbis have ruled that reporting abuse is not mesirah, a family that reports should pay no price. The question asks readers to name a family that reported and was not punished.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records that criminal law applies whatever the community's rules on informing. Nechemya Weberman was convicted on 59 counts in 2012, and community leaders later sought clemency for him [12].

QUESTION 3 OF 6

Public money funds these schools. Ask why the community fights the disclosure of what is taught in them.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Public money brings a public right to know what it pays for. The question asks why the community resists that disclosure.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records that the city found 18 of 39 yeshivas examined not "substantially equivalent" in 2023, and that about 100 Hasidic schools had received more than $1 billion in government funding over four years [4][11][12].

QUESTION 4 OF 6

When a man refuses his wife a get, which institution has ever imposed a real consequence on him? Not a statement — a consequence.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A statement is not a consequence. The question asks for one real case in which a get-refuser paid a price that an institution imposed.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The who-gets-hurt table lists get refusal among the burdens on women, "with six or more children and no secular education or independent income."

QUESTION 5 OF 6

If leaving is a personal choice, explain the community funds that appear in custody cases on one side only.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If leaving is personal, community money should not appear on one side of a custody case. The question asks readers to explain the asymmetry.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The forefront section records community funds appearing on one side of custody cases, set beside the claim "Nobody is forced to stay. Anyone may leave." GOVERNMENT REPORT / COURT RECORD.

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You were taught the walls protect you. Ask honestly whether they are still facing outward.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Walls that were built to protect a community from outside danger can end up keeping members in. The question asks which way they face today.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The forefront section notes that the claims on this page come from inside the community: rabbis ruling that abuse reporting is not mesirah, and parents fighting for English literacy.

In closing

There are people inside your community doing this work already — rabbis who ruled that reporting is not informing and parents fighting for English literacy. They did not leave. They stayed and refused. That is the model, and it is available to you.

Nothing here asks you to stop covering your hair or to eat treif (non-kosher food). It asks one thing: that a child in your community be able to read, and be able to tell someone, and be able to leave if he must — and that none of those three cost him his mother. If the community can give a child that, it loses nothing worth keeping.

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. **Plan for education and work.** Many who leave have little secular schooling; Footsteps offers educational and career help [7].
2. **If you have children,** see a family lawyer before you act; custody can become the hardest part.
3. **If you are married,** a religious divorce needs a *get*; see the help below [15] [16].
4. **If you or a child were abused,** go to the police; the law does not require you to ask a rabbi first [1] [6].
5. **Find others who have left** [7].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

25 Where to get help

BEFORE YOU READ

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

Checked 2026-09-27.

ORGANIZATION (continued)	FOR	WHERE	CONTACT
Footsteps	People leaving ultra-Orthodox communities	US	**877-STEPS-55** (general contact line, not a crisis line) [14]
ORA	People facing *get* refusal	US and international	**844-673-5463** [15]
Jewish Women's Aid	Domestic abuse, sexual violence, *get* refusal	UK	**0808 801 0500** (Mon–Thu 9:30am–9:30pm) [16]
Childhelp	Child abuse	US	**1-800-422-4453** (24 hours) [17]
NAPAC	Adult survivors of childhood abuse	UK	**0808 801 0331** (Mon–Thu 10am–9pm, Fri 10am–6pm) [18]
Hillel — The Right to Choose	People leaving Haredi life	Israel	Hotline; number and hours not verified for this page, see hillel.org.il [24]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Save one contact now, before anyone needs it: **Footsteps** (people leaving ultra-orthodox communities; US). 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 and government

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2. THE CITY, "Brooklyn DA Asked Cuomo to Commute Sentence for Notorious Child Molester" (May 2022 — community leaders' clemency campaign). https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/05/09/brooklyn-da-cumo-sentence-commute-request/
3. NYC Department of Investigation / Special Commissioner joint statement on the city's yeshiva investigation (18 Dec 2019). https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/press-releases/2019/dec/DOISCIJointStatementRelease12_18_19.pdf
4. JTA / New York Jewish Week, "18 NYC yeshivas do not adequately teach secular studies, investigation finds" (3 July 2023 — end of an eight-year investigation). https://www.jta.org/2023/07/03/ny/18-nyc-yeshivas-do-not-adequately-teach-secular-studies-investigation-finds
5. NPR, "Israeli Supreme Court rules that the military must begin drafting ultra-Orthodox men" (25 June 2024; unanimous; funding of non-complying yeshivas cut). https://www.npr.org/2024/06/25/g-s1-6116/israeli-supreme-court-rules-that-the-military-must-begin-drafting-ultra-orthodox-men

Community sources

6. The Forward, "Agudath Israel: Abuse Claims Go to Rabbis" (2011 — its rabbinical board requires consulting a rabbi first; R. Elyashiv permitted reporting where there is *raglayim la-davar*, a substantial basis). https://forward.com/news/156692/agudath-israel-abuse-claims-go-to-rabbis/

7. Footsteps — founded December 2003 by Malkie Schwartz; the organisation's own site (checked 2026-10-03) says it has served nearly 3,000 people. https://www.footstepsorg.org/about-us/

Demography and history

8. Israel Democracy Institute, *Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel 2024* — 1.39 million (13.9%), fertility ~6.5, growth ~4.2%/yr (≈17-year doubling). https://en.idi.org.il/articles/58484

9. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Hasidism" — the Baal Shem Tov (d. 1760); the Vilna Gaon's 1772 ban; dynastic courts; Agudath Israel founded 1912 (Katowice). https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hasidism

10. Jerusalem Post, "Donald Trump gathering produces unlikely reunion of Satmar Rebbes" (Sept 2026 — both Teitelbaum brothers still lead their factions). https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-907562

Further sources

11. New York Focus, "New York's Ultra-Orthodox Yeshivas Challenge New State Education..." (24 Feb 2025) — more than $1bn in government funding over four years; the 2022 Regents substantial-equivalency rules; YAFFED. https://nysfocus.com/2025/02/24/new-york-yeshivas-education-funding-debate
12. NY1, "Mayor and governor take passive approach to Hasidic school system exposé" (12 Sept 2022) — the *New York Times* investigation; Naftuli Moster, YAFFED founder. https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2022/09/12/mayor-and-governor-take-passive-approach-to-hasidic-school-system-expos-
13. Israel Democracy Institute, "Budget Allocation to the Ultra-Orthodox Education System Under 2025 Coalition Agreements" (3 Apr 2025). https://en.idi.org.il/articles/58949
14. Footsteps — 877-STEPS-55. https://footstepsorg.org/
15. ORA — Organization for the Resolution of Agunot; 844-673-5463. https://www.getora.org/
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17. Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-422-4453. https://childhelphotline.org/
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20. Israel Democracy Institute, *Annual Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Society in Israel 2025* — about 1.45 million people (14.3% of Israelis), up 50% in a decade from 950,000. https://en.idi.org.il/publications/63300

21. Journalist's Resource, account of the *New York Times* investigation of more than 100 Hasidic boys' schools (Sept 2022) — little instruction in core subjects, regular corporal punishment, more than $1bn in public money over four years. https://journalistsresource.org/education/hasidic-religious-private-schools-goldsmith-how-they-did-it/

22. World Jewish Congress, "Leader of ultra-Orthodox Jewish movement in New York dies" (25 April 2006) — the death of the Satmar Rebbe, Moses Teitelbaum, aged 91, the event after which the dynasty divided. https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/leader-of-ultra-orthodox-jewish-movement-in-new-york-dies

23. JTA, "Chabad Shluchim Return 'Home' From 108 Countries" (27 Nov 2019) — Chabad's emissaries gather in New York from 108 countries. https://www.jta.org/2019/11/27/ny/rebbes-emissaries-have-eyes-that-see-in-the-dark

24. Hillel — The Right to Choose (Israel) — support for people leaving Haredi life, including an anonymous hotline; the number and hours were not verified for this page. https://hillel.org.il/

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 New York school figures (the city found 18 of 39 yeshivas examined not substantially equivalent, and 14 of those findings still need state affirmation) and brought the state's school rules up to date with the June 2025 court ruling. Updated the Haredi population and Footsteps figures, softened several absolute statements about shunning, mutual aid and costs, removed two money cards that did not fit this tradition, and re-graded five techniques so each grade matches what its entry shows. Added six sources, hours for three help lines, and an Israeli support organisation.
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers, a third documented case, 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.