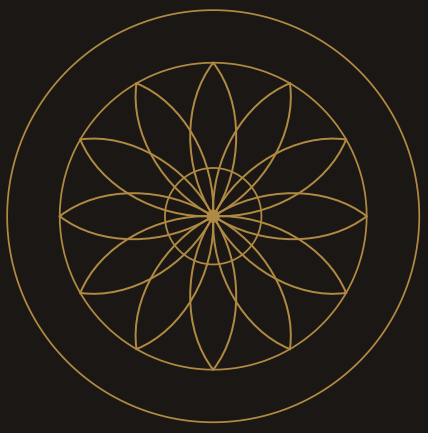


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Sikhism

Dharmic family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

Before you begin

This is the record of Sikhism 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 Sikhism 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	Sikhs number ~25–30 million. **ACADEMIC SOURCE** · Pew, Indian census
WHO'S IN CHARGE	The Jathedar (the head of a takht, a seat of Sikh religious authority) of the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat, is Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj, acting Jathedar since March 2025. The SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, the elected body that runs the historic gurdwaras) installed him after it removed his predecessor, Giani Raghbir Singh, on 7 March 2025 amid open political conflict [3].
CHOSEN BY	The SGPC executive chooses the Jathedar, and control of that body is itself won in party-contested elections.
REMOVABLE BY	The SGPC can remove him, and it has removed Jathedars repeatedly, which is the finding that the panth's (the Sikh community's) highest moral office is hire-and-fire.

MONEY IN ONE LINE	The money comes from golak (donation box) revenues of major gurdwaras, which are substantial; langar (the free communal kitchen) economies; diaspora remittances; and dera (sect-like movement) empires around living gurus. Dera Sacha Sauda's leader, convicted of rape in 2017, controlled a corporate-scale operation; a 2019 conviction for conspiring to murder a journalist was overturned on appeal in 2026 and is now before the Supreme Court. COURT RECORD / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	An Amritdhari (an initiated Sikh) who lapses faces community standing costs; family honor economies police marriage and appearance; and leaving a dera can mean losing an entire service-and-employment ecosystem.
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	The Gurus abolished caste five centuries ago. Why do the panth's own matrimonial pages still sort by it — and who profits from the sorting?
EVIDENCE	None of the 30 techniques is sourced to a named document; all 30 are graded Cultural
FAMILY	Dharmic — hinduism, hare-krishna, sikhism, jainism
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

ACCOUNTS	PAY	SAFEGUARDING	EXTERNAL FIRST	REMOVAL	REPLY
PARTIAL	NO	NO	PARTIAL	YES	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 SGPC executive chooses the Jathedar, and control of that body is itself won in party-contested elections", and to who can remove its holder, "The SGPC can remove him, and it has removed Jathedars repeatedly, which is the finding that the panth's (the Sikh community's) highest moral office is hire-and-fire". Read that as though it described the board of a pension fund holding your savings. Would you accept the arrangement there? The scorecard finds no public evidence of leaders' pay, a public safeguarding policy or on-the-record replies. It does find a written removal procedure, and that deserves credit. Each "No" is something the institution could publish tomorrow. Ask yourself why it hasn't.

02 A day inside

BEFORE YOU READ

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

Jasleen · A Tuesday in Vaisakh (the spring month of April–May) · Southall, west London

Her father does Nitnem (the daily prayers) at five and the sound of it through the wall is the sound of her entire childhood. She is twenty-four and she can hear him from her old bedroom and she is glad she came home for the week.

At the gurdwara at seven for the langar shift, because her mother volunteers Tuesdays and Jasleen is filling in. Two hundred people will eat here today, anyone at all, no questions, on the same floor. She has thought many times that whatever else her community has got wrong, it got this profoundly right.

In the kitchen the aunties are discussing the committee election. There is money in it — the golak, the hall hire, the building fund — and there are two factions who have not spoken since the last vote. Jasleen listens and does not participate. She has never seen the accounts, and she has never heard of anyone being shown them.

At eleven her cousin Simran calls, crying, because Simran's parents have found out about her boyfriend, whose family is Ravidasia (followers of the teachings of Guru Ravidas). Jasleen says all the right things. She does not say the thing she is actually thinking, which is that the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh scripture) is extremely clear about this and that everyone in both houses can read it, and that it will make no difference whatsoever.

In the afternoon someone mentions a dera leader, and a conviction, and a journalist who was shot, and a man at the next table says that it was all politics. Nobody argues with him. Jasleen thinks about how there is a photograph of that dera leader in her great-uncle's shop in Jalandhar.

At night her father asks, not unkindly, whether she is thinking about keeping her hair long again. She cut it at nineteen. She says she doesn't know. He says the Guru gave it as a gift. She says she knows. And she does

know, and she also knows that he means it about the gift and not about the neighbours, and that his brother does not, and that she has never been able to explain why that difference matters so much to her.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

03 The forefront

BEFORE YOU READ

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

> Your Gurus took the office of religious middleman and abolished it. The tenth handed authority to a book so that no living man could ever claim it again. That is one of the most deliberate anti-control acts in religious history — which makes it worth asking why so much control still operates in Punjab and in the diaspora under Sikh cover, and who is running it.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

The Gurus abolished caste five centuries ago. Why do the panth's own matrimonial pages still sort by it — and who profits from the sorting?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Sikhism rejects caste absolutely.	Caste-based gurdwaras exist, and inter-caste marriage still ends families.	ACADEMIC SOURCE

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Formal religious penalty	Rare	No clergy can excommunicate an ordinary member; chhaikka (formal excommunication by the Akal Takht) is used mainly against public figures.	The official position is that there is little formal exit penalty, and that is accurate.

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. What you are describing is Punjabi culture, not Sikhi (the Sikh way of life and faith).

What is true in it. The objection is largely true, and this codex agrees explicitly — caste, dowry, and sex selection are all condemned by the tradition's own scripture, which makes them cultural imports rather than religious teaching.

The answer. But that concession creates the sharper question: why does culture win every time it conflicts with the Gurus? The work here is not

deconstruction, it is enforcement. Most of the harms in this profile are already forbidden by your own doctrine.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *The Gurus abolished caste five centuries ago. Why do the panth's own matrimonial pages still sort by it — and who profits from the sorting?* 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 Sikhism, 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.

> Sikhs number ~25–30 million, with a homeland in Punjab and a major global diaspora. The tradition is founded on devotion to one God, equality, honest work and service, and its scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, is the eternal Guru.

- The tradition's built-in defenses are that it has no priests, that the congregation has direct access to scripture, and that langar practices radical equality. Diaspora gurdwaras are run by elected committees, many of them registered charities (in England and Wales, accounts are public above the filing threshold [18]). This page does not record which diaspora gurdwaras publish their accounts. Sikh institutions have confronted dera abuses.

Guruship passed to the scripture in 1708, which ended human succession [8]. The Sikh Rehat Maryada (the code of conduct) is published by the SGPC and sets out women's full participation [9].

Sources for this section: [8] [9]

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.

Guru Nanak founded the tradition in Punjab in the 15th and 16th centuries. There were ten human Gurus, and the community consolidated in martial form under persecution. The Khalsa (the order of initiated Sikhs) was created in 1699. Scriptural guruship then ended human succession, a deliberate anti-clerical design.

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



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

1

1469–1539

Guru Nanak's ministry in Punjab rejected caste, priestcraft and ritual monopoly.

The tradition was founded explicitly as a critique of religious hierarchy, anti-control by design.

2

1539–1604

Successor Gurus led the community, Amritsar was founded, and the Adi Granth (the first compilation of scripture) was compiled in 1604.

Scripture was standardized early, which reduced interpretive monopoly.

3

1606–1675

Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur were martyred under Mughal rule.

Persecution forged a martial, self-defending community.

4

1699

Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa.

The Khalsa gave the community a collective identity with visible markers and a shared code.

5

1708

Guruship passes to the scripture (Guru Granth Sahib), ending human succession

The change was a deliberate structural safeguard against personality cults, the tradition's core anti-guru move.

6 1799–1849

The Sikh Empire ruled under Ranjit Singh and was then annexed by the British.

The community gained statehood and lost it, and its institutions reorganized under colonial law.

7 1873–1925

The Singh Sabha reform movement ran, and the Gurdwara Act created the SGPC.

Control of historic gurdwaras becomes a statutory, electable prize — religion enters party politics. OFFICIAL POLICY

8 1947

Partition devastated Punjab and caused mass displacement.

Partition brought community trauma and diaspora formation.

9 1984

Operation Blue Star took place, Indira Gandhi was assassinated, and there were anti-Sikh massacres.

State violence struck the community's holiest site, and unresolved justice shapes politics to this day. GOVERNMENT REPORT

10 1990S–PRESENT

The global diaspora grew, dera movements expanded, and the Dera Sacha Sauda leader was convicted in 2017.

Living-guru movements — the very thing scriptural guruship was meant to prevent — become major power centers. COURT RECORD

Moments in the room

1699 — THE KHALSA, AND A NAME AGAINST CASTE

Guru Gobind Singh initiated the first five from different castes and regions, gave them a common surname, and had them initiate him in turn. Caste was abolished by design and by ritual, in public.

Why it matters. It is the clearest founding repudiation of caste anywhere in this codex, which is why this page's unanswered question about caste-sorted matrimonial pages is a question the tradition's own tenth Guru already answered.

1920–1925 — THE GURDWARA ACT, AND A PRIZE NOBODY PLANNED

The Akali reform movement wrested the historic gurdwaras from hereditary custodians, and the Sikh Gurdwaras Act of 1925 created the SGPC to manage them by election. It was a genuine democratic victory.

Why it matters. It also made the golak an electoral prize. The reform that liberated the shrines from priests delivered them to parties, an unintended consequence that is now the page's central accountability problem.

2015 AND AFTER — THE JATHEDARS COME AND GO

Successive holders of the Akal Takht Jathedarship have been installed and removed amid open political conflict, including further turnover in 2025.

Why it matters. The panth's highest moral office operates as an appointment of a party executive. Ask who a Jathedar answers to and the honest answer is a headquarters.

Sources for this section: [6] [8]

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

Sikhism 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 mainstream Khalsa Sikhism; Nihang, Namdhari, Nirankari and other sects; and numerous deras (some accepted, some doctrinally rejected as heterodox, meaning as departing from accepted doctrine).

BRANCH	WHERE	WHERE AUTHORITY SITS
Mainstream Khalsa Sikhism	It is found in Punjab and worldwide, with about 26 million Sikhs (2020) [7].	Authority sits with the Akal Takht and its Jathedar [3]; in Punjab it also sits with the SGPC, an elected statutory body that runs the historic gurdwaras [1].
Nihang, Namdhari, Nirankari and other groups	They are found mostly in Punjab.	Authority sits with their own leaders and practices.
Deras	They are found in Punjab and Haryana.	Authority sits with a living head, sometimes with vast property; the head of Dera Sacha Sauda was convicted of rape in 2017 [6].

Diaspora gurdwaras	They are found in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and elsewhere.	Authority sits with elected committees, which are often registered charities.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Sikhism, 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	Sikhs number ~25–30 million. **ACADEMIC SOURCE** · Pew, Indian census
Regions	Sikhs are the majority in Punjab, India, and have significant diaspora communities in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Malaysia, East Africa and Italy.
Trend	The community is growing in the diaspora, observance of visible markers is declining among some diaspora youth, and dera membership is substantial among marginalized-caste Punjabis, a fact usually left out of official accounts. **ACADEMIC SOURCE**
Participation	Gurdwara attendance is high relative to many traditions, but institutional authority is weak by design — there is no clergy that can excommunicate an individual.

Authority

- There is no priesthood by design, but in practice authority sits with gurdwara management committees, the SGPC (statutory body managing historic gurdwaras), jathedars of the takhts (the seats of religious authority), and deras (sect-like guru movements around living masters, doctrinally contested).
- Committee politics and SGPC elections entangle religious authority with party politics. **ACADEMIC SOURCE / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**

The top of the chain

> A tradition that abolished priesthood grew a political one, and the highest seat in the panth now serves at a party's pleasure.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
Jathedar of the Akal Takht — the highest temporal seat	Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj has been acting Jathedar since March 2025; the SGPC installed him after it removed his predecessor, Giani Raghbir Singh, on 7 March 2025 amid open political conflict [3].	The SGPC executive chooses the Jathedar, and control of that body is itself won in party-contested elections.	The SGPC can remove him, and it has removed Jathedars repeatedly, which is the finding that the panth's highest moral office is hire-and-fire.
SGPC presidency	The president is elected annually and controls the golak revenues of the historic gurdwaras, the acknowledged prize of the elections.	Statutory elections choose the president.	The next vote can remove the president.
The deras	They are parallel thrones with millions of followers and nothing above the throne. Dera Sacha Sauda ran until a criminal court, not the panth, stopped its head.	Deras are self-founding.	A court can remove a dera head, after conviction.

> **THE TELL**
>
> Ask who the Jathedar answers to. The honest answer is a party headquarters — and the Gurus' own institution deserves better than that sentence.

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
The SGPC	It is a statutory body.	Elected committee members hold it.	It holds management of historic gurdwaras and their very large donation revenues.	It determines who preaches and where the golak goes.	OFFICIAL POLICY · Gurdwara Act 1925
Akal Takht jathedars	They are a religious authority.	Appointed jathedars hold it.	They hold authority to issue edicts and excommunicate public figures.	It determines whether a scholar's research ends his career.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Dera organizations	They are living-guru movements.	Dera chiefs and their families hold them; one chief was convicted of rape, and his 2019 conviction for conspiracy to murder a journalist was overturned on appeal in 2026.	They hold corporate-scale operations, housing, employment and bloc votes.	They are proof of what the scriptural succession was designed to prevent.	COURT RECORD · Indian court judgments

Diaspora gurdwara committees	They are local governance bodies.	Elected factions hold them.	They hold remittance-funded property, contested in litigation and occasionally in violence.	They decide who controls the hall your community built.	COURT RECORD · diaspora gurdwara disputes
Family and caste marriage networks	They are an informal enforcement network.	Nobody holds them formally.	They enforce caste endogamy and appearance norms that the scripture explicitly forbids.	They decide whom your daughter may marry, against your own doctrine.	ACADEMIC SOURCE

Sources for this section: 1 3 6 7

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The Akal Takht's Jathedar is the highest moral office in Sikhi, and the SGPC can hire and fire him. It removed one, Giani Raghbir Singh, in March 2025. The SGPC is an elected body with a five-year term, yet its general house has not faced an election since 2011, and the electoral roll has fallen by almost half. If you live in Punjab, you have a vote in this, or should have. When were you last asked to use it?

08 Law & state here

BEFORE YOU READ

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

COUNTRY	WHAT THE LAW DOES	THE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION
India — gurdwaras	The Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925 makes the SGPC an elected body with a five-year term [1]	Its general house (the SGPC's full assembly) has not faced an election since 2011, and the electoral roll has fallen by almost half, about 46% (roughly 52 lakh voters in 2011 to 27.9 lakh in 2024) [1] [2]
India — Akal Takht	The Jathedar is appointed and removed by the SGPC [3]	The Jathedar, Giani Raghbir Singh, was removed on 7 March 2025 amid political conflict [3]
India — excommunication	The Akal Takht can excommunicate [4]	The scholar Gurbaksh Singh Kala Afghana was excommunicated in 2003 [4]
Canada	The Charter protects freedom of religion [1] [2].	The Supreme Court held in 2006 that a school's outright ban on a student's kirpan (the dagger Sikhs carry as an article of faith), even sealed in his clothing, was unconstitutional [1] [2].

Who can compel an answer

Three routes can compel an answer. The first is the SGPC's statutory elections, a genuine lever on paper, though the general house has not faced voters since 2011 and the rolls have fallen by almost half. The second is the Gurdwara Election Commission, which must call them. The third is the courts, which supervise gurdwara trusts abroad. The Jathedar cannot be petitioned; the body that hires him has not been voted on in fifteen years.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

In Canada, a Sikh student took his kirpan to the Supreme Court and won in 2006. If you are Canadian, that is your religious freedom working. In India, the 1925 Gurdwara Act made the historic gurdwaras electable. The page calls that a genuine democratic victory, which also made the donation box an electoral prize. Which do you think the Gurus would recognize: an elected committee, or a committee that doesn't face elections?

The second is the Gurdwara Election Commission, which must call them.

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 golak (donation box) revenues of major gurdwaras, which are substantial; langar economies; diaspora remittances; and dera empires around living gurus. Dera Sacha Sauda's leader, convicted of rape in 2017, controlled a corporate-scale operation; a 2019 conviction for conspiring to murder a journalist was overturned on appeal in 2026 and is now before the Supreme Court.

  COURT RECORD / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Golak (donation box) offerings	The stated purpose is gurdwara operations and langar.	Very large cash flows at historic gurdwaras have contested oversight, and committee elections are fought over control of them.	Committees and the SGPC benefit, and so, genuinely, does the langar hall. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Langar and seva	The stated purpose is free food and voluntary service.	It is genuinely one of the least coercive religious institutions in this codex, and the risk lies only in labor expectation and honor pressure.	The public benefits, and so does the community's reputation.
Diaspora remittances and building funds	The stated purpose is gurdwara construction.	Factions fight for control over management, and the fights occasionally reach litigation and violence over committees.	Committee factions benefit. COURT RECORD · diaspora gurdwara disputes
Dera economies	The stated purpose is to support the living guru's mission.	The operations are corporate in scale, with total internal authority and political protection.	Dera leadership and their families benefit. COURT RECORD

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS

Golak (donation box) offerings	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is gurdwara operations and langar. **HOW IT CONTROLS** Very large cash flows at historic gurdwaras have contested oversight, and committee elections are fought over control of them.	Committees and the SGPC benefit, and so, genuinely, does the langar hall. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
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Dera economies	**STATED PURPOSE** The stated purpose is to support the living guru's mission. **HOW IT CONTROLS** The operations are corporate in scale, with total internal authority and political protection.	Dera leadership and their families benefit.

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

Pipelines this tradition shares

DERA ECONOMY

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

Path. It runs from the living guru's organization to family-held entities and then to political protection.

Disclosed. Not recorded on this page.

Hidden. Not recorded on this page.

HONOR AND MARRIAGE ECONOMY

Source. The money and favor come from families managing reputation.

Path. It runs from matchmakers and community brokers to school admission and business trust, and on to conformity across the whole family.

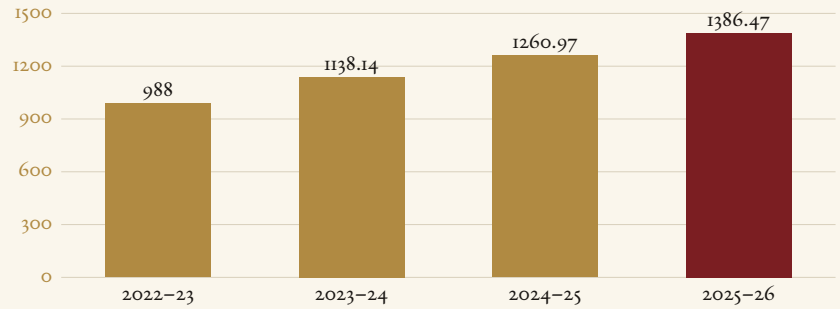
Disclosed. Nothing is disclosed.

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

Sources for this section: [6]

Money in numbers

SGPC ANNUAL BUDGET



₹ crore — Passed by the SGPC's general house; about ₹1,062 crore of the 2025–26 budget is for gurdwaras. [10] [11]

- **Growth:** the budget rose about 15% in 2023–24 (₹988 to ₹1,138.14 crore), about 11% in 2024–25 and about 10% in 2025–26 [10] [11].
- **Accountability:** the general house that passes this budget was last elected in 2011 [1].
- **Deras** publish no comparable accounts [6].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The golak, the donation box, at the major gurdwaras holds substantial revenue, and the page calls it "the acknowledged prize" of SGPC elections. If you drop money into a golak this week, who will decide how it is spent? Can you read last year's accounts? The questions section says to ask, and to note whether the answer is a number or an insult.

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?

LIVING-GURU (DERA) MOVEMENTS

Origin. Post-1708, various figures claimed continuing personal guruship despite the scriptural succession; the modern dera phenomenon expanded through the 20th century.

ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It served no purpose within Sikh doctrine; it is the precise thing the scriptural guruship was created to prevent. Their appeal is real, though: deras have served marginalized-caste

Punjabis whom mainstream gurdwaras treated poorly.

Why that reason expired. It was never legitimate doctrinally, and the outcomes are documented: the leader of Dera Sacha Sauda was convicted of rape in 2017. His 2019 conviction for conspiracy to murder a journalist was overturned on appeal in 2026 and is now before the Supreme Court. COURT RECORD

Who benefits now. Dera chiefs and their families benefit, running large operations with political protection because their followers vote in blocs.

COMMITTEE AND SGPC CONTROL OF GURDWARAS

Origin. The 1925 Gurdwara Act made control of historic gurdwaras a statutory, electable prize. OFFICIAL POLICY

What it was for. It was a genuine reform: it wrested shrines from hereditary custodians who had been treating them as private property.

Why that reason expired. It converted religious authority into an electoral asset. Committee control means control of very large cash flows and of who is allowed to preach, and party politics followed the money in.

Who benefits now. Political parties and committee factions benefit. Scholars have been excommunicated for historical research that displeased them. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

CASTE PRACTICE INSIDE A TRADITION THAT ABOLISHED IT

Origin. Punjabi caste structures persisted through Sikhism's explicit doctrinal rejection of them. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It served nothing Sikh. Guru Nanak attacked caste directly, and langar exists specifically to break it.

Why that reason expired. It has no doctrinal defense at all, which is why it is always defended as culture. Separate caste-based gurdwaras exist, and inter-caste marriage still triggers family rupture.

Who benefits now. Established landowning families and marriage networks benefit. Note that the deniability here is total precisely because doctrine is on your side and practice is not.

HONOR PRESSURE ON DAUGHTERS

Origin. Punjabi honor codes survive alongside a scripture that declares women equal.

ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It served kin-group status management, not religion.

Why that reason expired. Punjab's sex ratio became one of the most skewed in India despite unambiguous doctrinal condemnation of female infanticide. The gap between what your scripture says and what your community does is the widest in this codex.

Who benefits now. Family reputation economies benefit, as do the men whose standing depends on their daughters' compliance.

Sources for this section: [1]

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

- Committee and SGPC politics determine which preachers get platforms; excommunication (chhaikka) of dissenting scholars has been used against academics whose historical work displeased authorities. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- Dera movements exercise strong internal information control around their living gurus, resembling the guru-obedience patterns the tradition formally rejects. COURT RECORD / FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY
- Community honor pressure suppresses public discussion of caste within Sikhism (separate gurdwaras by caste exist despite doctrine), and of abuse. ACADEMIC SOURCE

Children

- Naam karan (the naming ceremony) and Amrit initiation (the rite of joining the Khalsa) are meant to be chosen. Initiation is voluntary and typically adolescent or adult, a genuine structural safeguard.
- Uncut hair and a turban for boys begin in early childhood, so visible identity is assigned before consent and carries school-bullying and workplace costs later. PATTERN OBSERVED
- Punjabi schools and camps build identity; family honor expectations around marriage and appearance begin young, particularly for girls.

Bodies

- Doctrine is explicitly egalitarian — women may lead prayers and perform all religious functions; the gap between that doctrine and practice is the story here.
- Women are excluded in practice from many senior committee and kirtan roles at major historic gurdwaras. **PATTERN OBSERVED**
- Female-selective abortion produced severely skewed sex ratios in Punjab despite clear doctrinal condemnation — one of the sharpest doctrine/practice gaps in this codex. **GOVERNMENT REPORT**
- Dowry and caste-endogamous marriage persist against explicit teaching; honor pressure on daughters' marriage choices is well documented.
- Dera guru sexual abuse convictions demonstrate the danger of the living-guru model. **COURT RECORD**

Sources for this section: 4 5 6 9

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

30
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 CULTURAL	13 Normalization / Desensitization CULTURAL		
STAGE 5 Isolate	14 Isolation CULTURAL	15 Triangulation CULTURAL		

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

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

BEFORE YOU READ

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

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

Stage 1 · Idealize

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

Langar, kirtan (hymn singing) and seva (voluntary service) give immediate dignity and belonging to a tradition of protectors. It is one of the genuinely warmest welcomes in this codex and it asks very little at first.

What it asks of you: The meal really is free. Be honest with yourself about what came after it.

1 · Love Bombing

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

How it shows here

- Newcomers can be deeply moved by langar, the free communal meal, where everyone sits together regardless of status.
- The gurdwara can offer immediate dignity: service, music, equality language, martial pride, community protection, and belonging to the Khalsa tradition.
- The hook becomes controlling when communal honor, family expectations, visible identity markers, marriage pressure, and loyalty to tradition become conditions of acceptance.

The strongest defense. Langar and seva are selfless service, not recruitment.

The counter. They can be selfless at the individual level and still function institutionally as attachment. The meal is free. The belonging may not be. If acceptance narrows as soon as someone questions authority, cuts hair, marries outside, or stops attending, then generosity was the door, not the destination.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The welcome at langar is open by design; any condition that later attaches to it comes from family and community expectation, not from a written rule.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- Sikh communities offer langar, hospitality, seva, music, community defense, identity, and practical support through the gurdwara.
- The free meal is one of the most powerful forms of religious generosity: it is public, embodied, egalitarian, and immediate.
- But generosity can become obligation when service, visible identity, marriage expectations, family honor, or loyalty to the community become conditions of acceptance.
- Someone who receives support may later be pressured to maintain hair, attend gurdwara, avoid out-marriage, perform seva, or uphold communal reputation.

The strongest defense. Langar is radically egalitarian. It feeds anyone, Sikh or not.

The counter. Langar itself can be beautiful and still exist inside communities that apply pressure elsewhere. The meal may be free. The belonging may not be. If generosity opens the door but conformity keeps you in the room, the institution has separated the food from the freedom.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The hospitality is real and given through the gurdwara; the obligation that can follow is applied by family and community expectation, which no rule sets.

Stage 2 · Hook

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

The offer is union with the divine, the Guru's grace and the honor of the panth, and your tradition deliberately did not put that promise behind a middleman. Retrieval, when it comes, is familial rather than institutional: a wedding, a death, a mother asking you to wear the turban again.

What it asks of you: Your tradition removed the human gatekeeper on purpose. Anyone now standing in the gap put themselves there.

3 · Future Faking

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

How it shows here

- Sikhism offers union with God, liberation from ego, escape from haumai (ego), divine remembrance, dignity through seva, and belonging to the Guru’s path.
- The future promise is both spiritual and communal: live as the Guru taught, serve, remember Naam (the divine Name), uphold justice, and your life becomes meaningful within a holy lineage.

- Institutional pressure can attach salvation and honor to visible conformity: keeping hair, wearing the articles of faith, marrying appropriately, raising Sikh children, serving the gurdwara, and protecting communal reputation.
- The believer may be told that present sacrifice preserves future dignity: endure discrimination, family pressure, discipline, and identity burden because the Guru's way is eternal.
- Community future-faking appears when children become the proof of faithfulness: your job is to keep the tradition alive through them.

The strongest defense. Sikh discipline is about remembrance, equality, courage, and service.

The counter. Discipline becomes future faking when communal honor replaces personal conscience. If future liberation, family pride, and tradition survival are used to make a person afraid to cut hair, marry freely, question leaders, or leave, then the future being protected is not the soul's freedom. It is the institution's continuity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The promise of union with God is the tradition's own teaching; the pressure that ties it to visible conformity is applied by families and community, and no clergy administers it.

4 · Hoovering

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

How it shows here

- A Sikh distancing from gurdwara life, visible identity, or family expectations may be told they are forgetting the Gurus, dishonoring the panth, or abandoning the sacrifices of Sikh history.
- Hair, turban, kirpan, langar, Punjabi identity, family honor, and marriage expectations can all become hooks back into compliance.
- A person who cuts hair, marries outside expectation, stops attending gurdwara, or questions leadership may be met with sadness, shame, or accusations of assimilation.
- The community may pull through service: "Come do seva," "Come eat langar," "Come back to kirtan," using beautiful practices to reattach the person emotionally.
- Parents may say: "We endured so much so you could live with dignity. Why are you throwing it away?"

The strongest defense. Sikh identity preserves courage, equality, remembrance, and resistance to oppression.

The counter. Identity is meaningful only if it is freely held. If history and sacrifice are used to make someone afraid to change, question, marry freely, or leave, then memory is no longer inspiration. It is pressure.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The pull back is applied by families and the congregation through weddings, funerals and a mother's request; no clergy performs it.

Stage 3 · Devalue

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

You are told you are not amritdhari enough, not visibly Sikh enough, not serving enough, or marrying wrong. Family honor is the metric more often than doctrine.

What it asks of you: Check whether the standard you are failing is in the Granth (the Guru Granth Sahib) or in your uncle's opinion.

5 · Devaluation

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

How it shows here

- Sikhism can devalue through community honor, visible identity, family obligation, and the expectation to live up to the sacrifices of the Gurus and the panth.
- A person who cuts hair, removes visible identity markers, marries outside expectation, stops attending gurdwara, or questions leadership may be treated as weak, assimilated, ashamed, or disrespectful.

- The individual may be compared unfavorably to martyrs and ancestors: they endured persecution, while you cannot endure inconvenience.
- Family shame can turn personal identity into communal property.
- The person is valued not simply as a person, but as a bearer of Sikh continuity.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity is about courage, equality, service, and remembrance.

The counter. Identity becomes devaluation when the person is only praised while carrying it correctly. If love narrows when someone changes appearance, questions authority, or chooses differently, then the identity is not merely sacred. It is conditional worth.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The standard a person is judged against is family honor and community expectation, not doctrine, and no institution sets it.

6 · Gaslighting

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

How it shows here

- A Sikh who questions visible identity, family expectations, gurdwara politics, or communal pressure may be told they are ashamed of who they are.

- Someone who cuts hair may be treated as weak, assimilated, or disrespectful to the Gurus.
- A person says community honor feels controlling, and the answer becomes, "You are forgetting the sacrifices made for you."
- Criticism of leadership can be reframed as disloyalty to the panth.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity preserves courage, equality, and remembrance of sacrifice.

The counter. Sacrifice should inspire courage, not silence. If history is used to make people distrust their own need for freedom, then remembrance has become pressure disguised as pride.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The doubt is induced in conversation by relatives and community members, and no institutional procedure directs it.

7 · Double Bind

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

How it shows here

- Sikhs are taught sovereign conscience — the Guru made every Sikh a sovereign — yet questioning gurdwara committees or jathedars is framed as attacking the Panth itself.
- Amritdhari Sikhs vow visible articles of faith; lapse and you have broken the vow, but raising doubts before taking amrit marks you as spiritually unready. Ready means no longer asking.

- The tradition honors martyrs who defied empires — while some families and committees treat a child's dissent as dishonor to those same martyrs.

The strongest defense. Sikhism explicitly rejects priestly mediation; the community is self-governing.

The counter. Self-governance without accountability simply relocates the bind from clergy to committee. The absence of priests is not the absence of power — it is power without robes.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The bind arises between the tradition's teaching of sovereign conscience and the framing by committees and families that questioning them attacks the Panth; it operates socially, and nothing written requires it.

Stage 4 · Confuse

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

Raise caste and you are importing Western identity politics. Raise a dera abuse case and you are attacking a saint. Raise committee finances and you are dividing the panth.

What it asks of you: Notice that the doctrine agrees with you and the room does not. That gap is the whole story.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Sewa (service) in the gurdwara is its own reward — usually invisible, occasionally spotlit by committee honor or community praise, and the unpredictability of recognition quietly converts devotion into competition.
- Families feel the sangat's (the congregation's) warmth vary with visible conformity — turban, uncut hair, attendance — on an unposted scale enforced by temperature rather than text.
- Ardas (petition) answered is Guru's grace; unanswered is Guru's will (bhana) to be accepted — a frame where the tradition's genuine wisdom about acceptance also guarantees the practice never registers a loss.

The strongest defense. Sikh teaching explicitly condemns ritualism and status-seeking; sewa is meant to be anonymous.

The counter. Meant to be — and the ideal is the alibi. Where committees in practice spotlight some sewa and shadow other, the anonymity teaching functions as deniability for a working honor economy.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The recognition a person receives varies with how committees and the congregation spotlight some service and not other service; there is no written scale, and the teaching is that service should be anonymous.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

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

How it shows here

- A Sikh participates in gurdwara life. Then expectations expand: keep hair, wear visible identity markers, marry appropriately, raise Sikh children, do seva, preserve Punjabi or panthic (of the Sikh community) identity.
- A person keeps identity markers but questions leadership. The goalpost moves: visible practice is not enough; they must also show loyalty and avoid dishonoring the panth.
- Someone serves in the community but is still judged for marriage choice, appearance, language, caste-like expectations, or family reputation.

The strongest defense. Sikh discipline expresses courage, remembrance, and commitment.

The counter. Commitment becomes moving the goalposts when identity is never accepted as freely lived but constantly audited by family and community. Courage cannot require permanent external approval.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The expectations expand through family and community scrutiny of marriage, appearance and loyalty, and no written rule sets them.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

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

How it shows here

- Visible identity may be described as personal devotion, communal duty, historical memory, family honor, or religious requirement depending on pressure.
- Equality is emphasized in principle, while caste-like patterns, gender control, or family reputation may persist in practice.
- "Respect for the Gurus" can mean reverence, but also silence toward gurdwara politics or family coercion.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity is both personal and collective.

The counter. Collective identity becomes strategic ambiguity when the individual is free in theory but punished in practice. If appearance, marriage, and dissent are optional only until someone opts out, the ambiguity is enforcement camouflage.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The ambiguity lies in how families and communities describe visible identity as devotion, duty, memory or requirement as the pressure changes, and no authority fixes which it is.

11 · Projection

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

How it shows here

- A Sikh who cuts hair or changes visible identity may be accused of shame or weakness while the community projects its fear of loss onto the person's body.
- Critics of gurdwara politics may be accused of disrespecting the panth while leaders betray Sikh values of equality and courage.
- Women or younger members may be accused of dishonoring family while family honor is used to control marriage, appearance, and life choices.
- Dissenters are accused of forgetting sacrifice while the community forgets that sacrifice was supposed to protect dignity.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity preserves courage, sacrifice, and resistance to oppression.

The counter. Courage cannot be preserved by punishing honest dissent. If communal fear is projected onto the person who changes, questions, or leaves, identity has become a container for anxiety rather than freedom.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The accusations come from family members and community figures in conversation, and no institution directs them.

12 · DARVO

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

How it shows here

- A person names gurdwara corruption, family pressure, gender control, caste-like discrimination, or coercion around identity markers. The response may be denial: “That is not Sikhism.”
- Then the critic is accused of disrespecting the Gurus, dishonoring the panth, being ashamed of Sikh identity, or causing division.
- A person who cuts hair or marries outside expectation may be treated as though they harmed the family, even if they were the one being controlled.
- Community honor becomes the injured party; the individual’s autonomy becomes the offense.
- The tradition’s language of courage is used to shame those brave enough to dissent.

The strongest defense. Sikh teachings emphasize equality, justice, and dignity; abuses are cultural distortions.

The counter. Calling abuse “not real Sikhism” may be theologically convenient, but it does not help the person harmed inside Sikh spaces. If the community uses ideal teachings to deny real patterns, then doctrine is being used as reputation management.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The denial and reversal are given by community members in conversation ("That is not Sikhism"), and the tradition's own teaching on equality and justice contradicts the abuses being denied.

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

- Visible identity, family honor, gurdwara attendance, seva, language, marriage expectations, and communal reputation can become normalized as inseparable from being Sikh.
- A person may become used to having hair, turban, clothing, marriage, and children treated as communal symbols rather than personal choices.
- Service can be normalized into expectation: because seva is sacred, unpaid labor and constant availability may be difficult to refuse.
- Community pride may desensitize people to internal caste-like dynamics, gender pressure, or gurdwara politics.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity and seva preserve equality, courage, memory, and service.

The counter. Service and identity become desensitization when refusal costs belonging. If people stop noticing that personal choices are being audited by family and community, pride has become pressure.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The normalization happens inside families and congregations through everyday expectation, and no institution mandates 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.

For most Sikhs the isolation is low, because there is no clergy to bind you. In deras it is total, with housing, employment and community all internal. In the diaspora, gurdwara networks carry marriage and business trust.

What it asks of you: Ask whether your dependency is on the Guru or on a committee.

14 · Isolation

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

How it shows here

- Sikh isolation can occur through family honor, gurdwara community, visible identity, marriage expectations, Punjabi cultural networks, and pressure to preserve the panth.
- A person who cuts hair, removes a turban, marries outside expectation, or stops attending gurdwara may be socially distanced or treated as assimilated.

- Family and community may discourage close romantic or social ties outside approved circles to preserve identity, reputation, language, and continuity.
- The person may feel unable to leave because doing so would not merely change belief; it would visibly mark them as abandoning history, family, sacrifice, and community pride.
- Community life can become both support and boundary: langar, seva, kirtan, festivals, and family networks supply belonging while also defining where belonging ends.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity preserves courage, equality, service, and memory of sacrifice.

The counter. Identity becomes isolation when love narrows around compliance. If someone's family and community withdraw warmth when they change appearance, marry freely, or question authority, then identity is being used to patrol the border.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Marriage endogamy and appearance expectations are family-enforced against explicit scriptural equality.

15 · Triangulation

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

How it shows here

- Sikh triangulation can run through parents, gurdwara, sangat, panth, Gurus, martyrs, family honor, hair, turban, Punjabi identity, and community memory.

- A person who cuts hair may be compared to ancestors who died rather than abandon Sikh identity.
- Marriage and dating are triangulated through family, caste-like expectations, community opinion, and gurdwara networks.
- Refusing gurdwara participation may be framed as rejecting not just religion but the sacrifices of the Gurus and the dignity of the panth.
- The community may triangulate through seva: "Come serve," "The sangat needs you," "The children look up to you."
- A person's private identity choices are treated as symbols affecting the whole community.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity carries collective memory, sacrifice, courage, and service.

The counter. Collective memory becomes triangulation when it makes personal autonomy feel like betrayal. If the martyrs, parents, children, community, and Gurus are all invoked to control one person's hair, marriage, or belief, then remembrance has become surveillance.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The intermediaries are parents, the congregation, martyr memory and family honor, invoked in conversation, and no institution places them there.

Stage 6 · Extract

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

Golak cash flows at historic gurdwaras are fought over in committee elections. Dera economies have total internal authority. Family honor extracts compliance on hair, marriage and appearance. Raise caste and be told you are importing Western politics; raise dera abuse and be told you are attacking a saint.

What it asks of you: Your scripture forbids nearly everything extracted from you in its name. Ask the person extracting it to cite a line.

16 · Flying Monkeys

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

How it shows here

- A Sikh who cuts hair, changes appearance, marries outside expectations, or stops attending gurdwara may be pressured by parents, relatives, gurdwara elders, community friends, and family networks.

- The person may hear: “You are ashamed of who you are,” “Think of the Gurus,” “You are dishonoring the panth.”
- Family members may recruit others to correct the person through pride, shame, history, and sacrifice.
- Gurdwara politics may use community loyalists to discredit critics who name corruption, caste-like dynamics, or gender pressure.

The strongest defense. Sikh communities care deeply about identity, dignity, and continuity.

The counter. Community care becomes FLYING MONKEY pressure when identity is enforced through shame. If relatives, elders, and community members converge on someone’s hair, marriage, body, or silence, they are not protecting dignity. They are policing it.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Honor pressure on appearance and marriage is family-enforced and doctrinally contradicted by the tradition's own scripture.

17 · Smear Campaign

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

How it shows here

- A Sikh who cuts hair, marries outside expectations, or criticizes gurdwara leadership may be smeared as ashamed, weak, assimilated, disrespectful, or dishonoring the panth.
- Women resisting family control may be described as selfish or corrupted.

- Critics of caste-like dynamics or gender inequity may be accused of attacking Sikh unity.
- Family gossip can recast autonomy as betrayal.

The strongest defense. Sikh communities protect identity, courage, and memory of sacrifice.

The counter. Identity becomes smear when anyone who changes or questions is portrayed as weak. If courage is real, the community should be able to face internal criticism without destroying the critic.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The smearing is done by family gossip and community opinion, and the institution neither directs nor prevents it.

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

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

How it shows here

- A person raises gurdwara corruption, caste-like discrimination, family coercion, or gender pressure and is told not to create division in the sangat.
- Family may refuse discussion about hair, marriage, identity, or autonomy and instead withdraw warmth or shame the person publicly.
- Leaders may celebrate Sikh equality in principle while ignoring inequity in practice.
- The person who asks for accountability is told to do seva, attend kirtan, or remember the Gurus instead of receiving an answer.

The strongest defense. Community unity and respect for the Gurus matter.

The counter. Unity becomes stonewalling when it requires silence about injustice. If a community founded on dignity cannot answer the people it shames, then reverence has become evasion.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The refusal to answer is given by family members and community leaders who tell the questioner to keep the peace, and no written rule requires it.

19 · Manufactured Consent

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

How it shows here

- A person "chooses" visible identity while family honor, community pride, martyr memory, and belonging all attach to hair, turban, and appearance.
- Marriage choices may be shaped by family, caste-like expectations, gurdwara networks, and reputation.
- Seva appears voluntary, but refusal may feel selfish because service is tied to spiritual dignity.
- A person "chooses" silence about gurdwara politics because criticism may be framed as dishonoring the panth.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity and service are freely embraced expressions of commitment.

The counter. Commitment is free only if refusal is safe. If changing appearance, marrying freely, or criticizing leadership costs belonging and honor, the community has manufactured consent around identity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The pressure described here comes from family honor, community pride and martyr memory, and no written rule sets it. Amrit initiation is voluntary and typically adolescent or adult, a safeguard that sits beside this pressure and does not remove it.

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- The community may bond people through pride, sacrifice, martyr memory, family honor, and visible identity.
- A person who changes hair, marriage plans, or gurdwara participation may be shamed, then warmly accepted again when they return.
- Seva can create relief after guilt: you feel selfish, then service restores belonging.
- Family pressure creates distress; gurdwara, kirtan, langar, and community approval soothe it.

The strongest defense. Sikh community and identity offer dignity, courage, and service.

The counter. Dignity becomes TRAUMA BONDING when shame is used to make people return for approval. If love withdraws when identity is lived differently and returns when conformity resumes, the bond is conditional.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The shame and the welcome back both come from family and congregation, and no institution designs the cycle.

21 · Learned Helplessness

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

How it shows here

- A person tries to change appearance, marry freely, or question gurdwara politics and faces family shame, community gossip, and accusations of dishonoring the panth.
- They learn that autonomy causes pain for parents, elders, and community.
- Service becomes a way to regain approval, but approval never fully frees them.
- Eventually they stop asking what they want and ask only what will avoid dishonor.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity carries sacrifice, courage, and collective dignity.

The counter. Dignity becomes LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when personal choice is treated as communal injury. If the only way to be honorable is to disappear into expectation, courage has been inverted.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The helplessness is learned through family shame and community gossip, and no rule or office imposes it.

22 · Benevolent Control

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

How it shows here

- Family and community may control hair, marriage, gurdwara participation, seva, and identity under the language of dignity and remembrance.
- A person is told visible identity protects courage, history, and connection to the Gurus.
- Women or young people may face pressure framed as preserving honor and community strength.
- Criticism of gurdwara politics may be discouraged to protect unity.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity preserves courage, equality, sacrifice, and service.

The counter. Identity becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when it is not freely held. If love and honor depend on maintaining appearance, marriage expectations, and silence, dignity has become conditional approval.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Appearance and marriage expectations are family-enforced and contradicted by the tradition's own scripture.

23 · Infantilization

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

How it shows here

- Adults may be treated as immature if they cut hair, marry outside expectation, question gurdwara politics, or loosen community participation.
- Family elders may speak as though younger members cannot understand sacrifice or identity.
- Women may be managed through family honor and marriage expectations.
- Community pride can turn personal choice into something elders must correct.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity carries history, sacrifice, and responsibility.

The counter. Responsibility becomes INFANTILIZATION when adults are not trusted to carry identity differently. If changing appearance or marrying freely makes the community treat someone like a wayward child, pride has become paternalism.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Elders treat adults as immature through family and community custom, and no institution assigns them that role.

24 · Identity Erosion

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

How it shows here

- Identity may be shaped through hair, turban, kirtan, gurdwara, seva, Punjabi culture, family honor, martyr memory, and panthic belonging.
- The person's body becomes a communal symbol.
- Cutting hair, marrying outside expectation, or changing practice can feel like losing not just religion but family pride and ancestral courage.
- Service can replace self: the good Sikh serves, preserves, remembers, and represents.
- Personal autonomy may be interpreted as assimilation.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity preserves dignity, courage, equality, and remembrance.

The counter. Identity becomes IDENTITY EROSION when the person exists mainly as a representative of the group. If your hair, marriage, body, and children are symbols before they are yours, dignity has become collective ownership.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The identity role is shaped by family and communal expectation around hair, marriage and service, not by an institutional requirement.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

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

How it shows here

- Family or community harm may be bypassed through honor, sacrifice, seva, and remembrance of the Gurus.
- A person's pain over identity pressure may be dismissed as assimilation or weakness.
- Gurdwara politics may be bypassed with calls for unity.
- Gender or caste-like issues may be bypassed by pointing to Sikh ideals of equality rather than addressing violations.
- Service may become a way to avoid conflict.

The strongest defense. Sikh teachings emphasize equality, courage, and service.

The counter. Ideals become SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when they are used to deny practice. If equality is quoted to avoid confronting inequality, the teaching is being used as cover.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The spiritual language is used by relatives, committees and leaders who point to Sikh ideals of equality; the ideals are real, and using them as cover is a community practice, not a policy.

26 · Financial Control

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

How it shows here

- Sikh financial control may appear through gurdwara donations, community fundraising, wedding expenses, family business networks, charity expectations, and seva labor.
- Langar is free, but community status may still attach to donations, service, family reputation, and event sponsorship.
- Marriage and family expectations can create heavy financial pressure.
- A person who questions community norms may risk family or business support.

The strongest defense. Sikh giving and seva sustain equality, langar, and community care.

The counter. Service becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when generosity turns into expectation. If family honor, business ties, marriage networks, and gurdwara standing depend on compliance, the community has made money a quiet enforcer.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The pressure described here comes from family, wedding and business-network expectation, and no institution sets it. The contested golak revenues at historic gurdwaras (section 9) are a separate matter and are not evidence for these bullets.

Stage 7 · Discard

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

Institutionally the cost is little, because no clergy can excommunicate you. Familially it is severe: cutting hair, marrying out, or leaving a dera can cost you everyone.

What it asks of you: Your religion is not punishing you. People are, in its name, and they are counting on you not knowing the difference.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Sikh communities may manufacture crisis around hair, turban, intermarriage, language loss, gurdwara conflict, family honor, and assimilation.
- A person cutting hair may be treated as abandoning sacrifice and weakening identity.
- Criticism of community leaders may be framed as harming unity or disrespecting the panth.
- Family panic can turn personal choices into public emergencies.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity preserves history, dignity, and resistance to oppression.

The counter. Preservation becomes MANUFACTURED CRISIS when personal change is treated as communal collapse. If one person's hair, marriage, or dissent is made to carry the weight of the panth, fear has replaced dignity.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The urgency is raised by families and community figures around hair, marriage and dissent, and no institution mandates it.

28 · Discard

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

How it shows here

- A Sikh who cuts hair, marries outside expectation, stops attending gurdwara, or criticizes leadership may be treated as ashamed, assimilated, or dishonoring the panth.
- Family pride may turn into disappointment, silence, or gossip.
- A person may still be "one of us" culturally but lose moral respect.
- The body becomes the site of discard: hair, turban, clothing, marriage, children.

The strongest defense. Sikh identity carries sacrifice, history, and collective dignity.

The counter. Dignity becomes DISCARD when personal change makes love withdraw. If the community's respect depends on visible conformity, then identity is not freely honored. It is policed.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The discard described here is the withdrawal of family and community respect, and no institution mandates it. The one institutional discard is chhaikka, used by the Akal Takht against public figures and scholars such as Kala Afghana (section 19) [4]; it does not reach ordinary members.

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 culture and family honor.

No one can strike you from a roll, so the gurdwara continues and your family quietly reorganizes. And the authority invoked is not even religious most of the time — it is culture, honor, what people will say.

What it asks of you: When the justification is what the neighbors think rather than what the Guru said, you are not being asked to be devout.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A person who cuts hair or leaves gurdwara life is compared with someone who preserves visible identity.
- Families shift pride toward the child who marries correctly, attends gurdwara, and maintains reputation.
- Community roles are filled by those who do seva without questioning politics or hierarchy.

- The compliant representative replaces the complicated person.

The strongest defense. Communities honor those who uphold identity and service.

The counter. Honor becomes REPLACEMENT when it teaches people they are loved for representing the group. If the community can swap one body for another under the turban, the person has been reduced to symbol.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Families shift pride toward the compliant child and community roles go to those who do not question, and no institution assigns either.

30 · Plausible Deniability

The institution is never responsible, because the authority is attributed to culture and family honor, which no one can cross-examine.

How it shows here

- Community pressure around hair, turban, marriage, gurdwara attendance, language, and children may be described as pride and remembrance, not control.
- Families may say they are not forcing identity, while shame and disappointment enforce it.
- Gurdwara politics can deny caste-like or gendered dynamics by pointing to Sikh ideals of equality.
- Criticism of leadership may be framed as disrespecting the panth, while leaders deny suppressing dissent.

- Seva is voluntary, but refusal may mark someone as selfish or disconnected.

The strongest defense. Sikhism teaches equality, courage, and service. Identity markers are freely embraced. Community concern preserves heritage.

The counter. Ideals become PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY when they are used to deny violations in practice. Identity is not freely embraced if refusal costs belonging. Heritage cannot be preserved by making adult bodies into communal symbols without consent.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Authority is most often attributed to culture and reputation rather than to the Guru — which is the finding.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

13

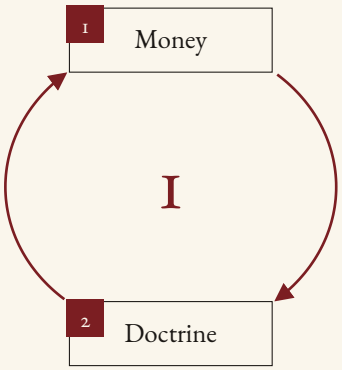
The loops

BEFORE YOU READ

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

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

1 · Money to Doctrine to Money



Golak revenue funds committees whose control is a statutory electoral prize, and the elections are fought over the revenue.

How it runs.

1. Golak offerings flow into the historic gurdwaras as very large cash flows with contested oversight (section 9).
2. The 1925 Gurdwara Act made control of those gurdwaras a statutory, electable prize, held through the SGPC (sections 5 and 7).
3. Committee factions and parties fight SGPC and committee elections for that control, and the SGPC presidency controls the golak revenues (sections 7 and 9).

4. Committee control decides who is allowed to preach and who is given a platform (sections 10 and 11).

5. The giving continues, and the next election is fought over the same revenue (section 9).

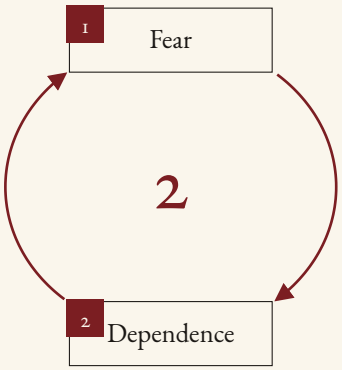
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 25 · Spiritual Bypassing, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling.

Why it closes. The committees that receive the golak also decide who preaches (section 10), and they hold office through elections fought over that revenue (sections 7 and 9). Oversight of those cash flows is contested (section 9).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever the money becomes visible. The general house that passes the SGPC budget has not been elected since 2011 (section 9), and a general election held on schedule would revise the political-capture finding (section 20). A giver can ask the committee for the golak accounts (section 23), and a registered diaspora gurdwara charity must file accounts publicly above the income threshold (section 20); this page does not name one that does. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The SGPC passed a budget of ₹1,386.47 crore for 2025–26, and the general house that passed it was last elected in 2011 (section 9).

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



Family honor rather than doctrine supplies the fear, the community supplies the relief, and nobody had to be instructed.

How it runs.

1. Family honor, not doctrine, sets the standard a person is measured against (section 12, stage 3).
2. A person who cuts hair, removes a turban or marries outside caste or faith meets family rupture (section 15).
3. Relatives and community members enforce the norms without being asked (section 15, volunteer enforcement; technique 16).
4. Service, kirtan and langar restore belonging after the guilt, so the same community that caused the distress supplies the relief (technique 20).
5. The person learns that autonomy causes pain and ends by asking only what will avoid dishonor, which keeps the fear in place (technique 21).

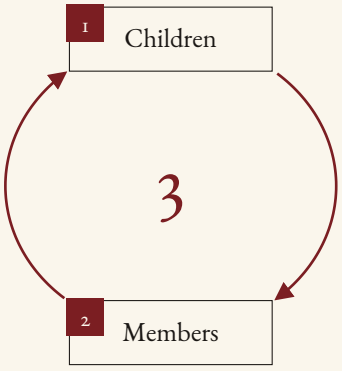
Techniques that feed it. 16 · Flying Monkeys, 20 · Trauma Bonding, 21 · Learned Helplessness, 8 · Intermittent Reinforcement.

Why it closes. The fear and the relief come from the same people. The institution disclaims family and cultural conduct, and there is no clergy to hold responsible (section 15), so no office exists to which a person can appeal.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where a person tests the standard against the text. Section 12 (stage 3) asks whether the standard is in the Granth or in an uncle's opinion, and section 23 asks the family to cite a line. The relatives who enforce the standard are the people who can stop enforcing it. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. A person who cuts her hair or marries outside expectation may be shamed and then warmly accepted again when she returns, and service restores belonging after guilt (technique 20).

3 · Children to Members to Children



Appearance markers are assigned in early childhood, and marriage networks price a whole family's conformity.

How it runs.

1. Uncut hair and a turban for boys begin in early childhood, so visible identity is assigned before consent (section 11).
2. Punjabi schools and camps build identity, and family honor expectations around marriage and appearance begin young, particularly for girls (section 11).
3. An adult who cuts hair or marries outside caste or faith meets family rupture (section 15).
4. Matchmakers and community brokers connect marriage to school admission and business trust, so one person's choice carries the whole family's standing (section 9).
5. The conforming adult raises the next child inside the same expectations, and the loop repeats.

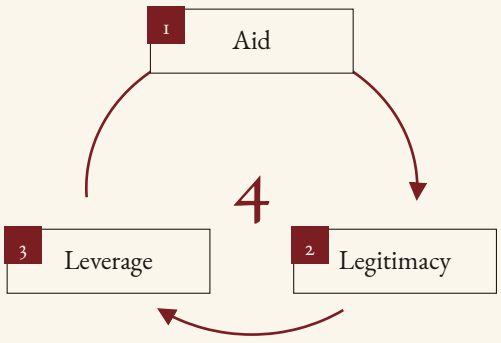
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 24 · Identity Erosion, 23 · Infantilization.

Why it closes. The marker is assigned before the person can consent, and refusing it later costs family standing and marriage prospects (sections 9 and 15).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where identity is chosen rather than assigned. Amrit initiation is voluntary and typically adolescent or adult, a safeguard the tradition built deliberately (section 11). Teachers and camp leaders could refuse to teach the honor norms the Gurus condemned (section 18). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Youth who cut their hair bear family rupture over a visible marker assigned in early childhood, and boys who were bullied for it are then punished for stopping (sections 16 and 17).

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



Dera bloc votes buy political protection, and protection sustains the organizations.

How it runs.

1. Deras draw devotee giving and unpaid service to a living guru's organization (section 9).
2. Their followers vote in blocs, which gives the dera leader value to politicians (section 10).
3. Politicians court the deras and give them political protection (sections 14 and 16).
4. Protected, a dera runs a corporate-scale operation with total internal authority over housing, employment and community (sections 7, 9 and 12).
5. Followers who depend on the dera for work and welcome keep voting in blocs, and the exchange repeats.

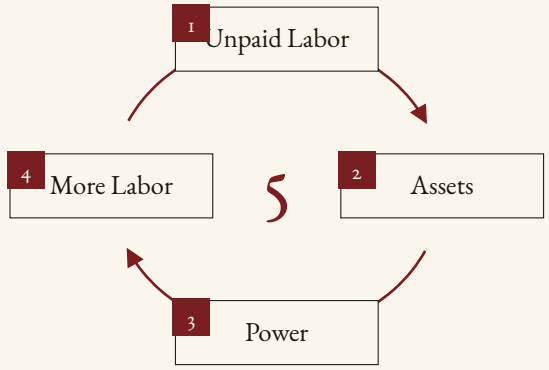
Techniques that feed it. 14 · Isolation, 22 · Benevolent Control, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. The dera supplies the votes and the politicians supply the protection, and each side's advantage depends on the other's (section 16). Nothing stands above a dera's throne (section 7).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where a court acts, as when a criminal court, not the panth, stopped the head of Dera Sacha Sauda (section 7), and where a politician returns a dera's support and says why, which section 23 asks any Sikh political figure to do. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The head of Dera Sacha Sauda was convicted of rape in 2017, and the organization had operated at corporate scale with political protection and bloc-vote influence (section 19).

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



The sangat's labor builds and maintains the institutions, and committees and deras hold them.

How it runs.

1. Seva is sacred service, so unpaid labor and constant availability are difficult to refuse (technique 13).
2. The sangat's labor builds and maintains the gurdwaras and runs the langar (sections 9 and 18).
3. Remittance-funded property and building funds are held by committee factions, and a dera's assets are held in family entities (sections 7 and 9).
4. Holding the assets gives committees and deras the standing to call for more service: "The sangat needs you" (technique 15).

5. Refusing service can mark a person as selfish, so the labor continues (technique 19).

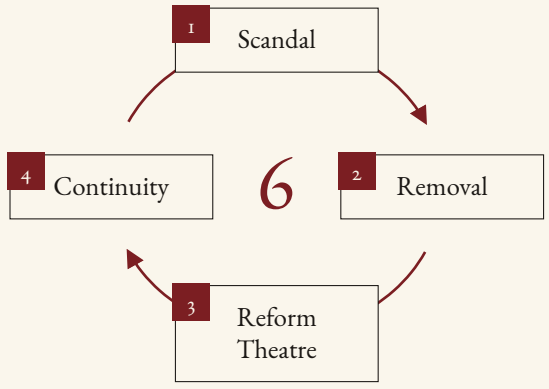
Techniques that feed it. 13 · Normalization / Desensitization, 15 · Triangulation, 19 · Manufactured Consent, 25 · Spiritual Bypassing.

Why it closes. The labor is unpaid and sacred, while ownership sits with the committees and dera families who hold the assets (section 9). The people who give the labor have no seat in deciding what is done with what it builds.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where those who hold the assets publish accounts. Section 18 lists what a committee member could do, to stand on a platform of published accounts, and what a sevadar could do, to refuse to let caste seating reappear near the hall. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Section 14 says to watch for sewa when it is invoked to obtain unpaid labour for institutions with substantial revenue.

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



A dera leader is convicted and his organization continues, with no party publicly withdrawing its support.

How it runs.

1. A scandal reaches a court, as when the head of Dera Sacha Sauda was convicted of rape in 2017 (section 19).

2. The removal comes from a criminal court and not from the panth (section 7).
3. The organization continues operating, and its political patrons are unrepentant (section 14).
4. Section 14 predicts that the next scandal will be answered with an edict against the person who raised it, and that the golak accounts will still not be published.
5. No structure changes: the Jathedar cannot be petitioned, and nothing stands above a dera's throne (sections 7 and 8).

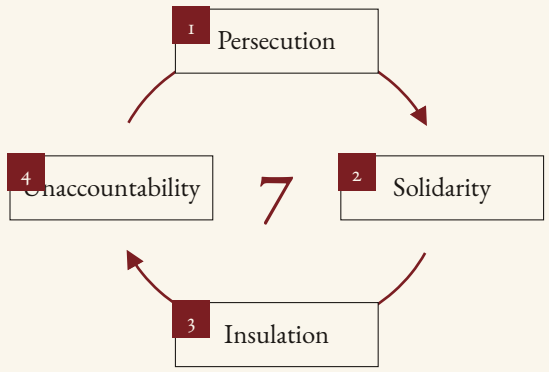
Techniques that feed it. 12 · DARVO, 30 · Plausible Deniability, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 25 · Spiritual Bypassing.

Why it closes. The removal of one person answers the scandal without touching the structure that produced it. The dera continues, the patrons stay, and no written procedure forces a change (sections 7 and 14).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where a politician returns the support and says why (section 23) and where a committee publishes its accounts (sections 18 and 20). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The head of Dera Sacha Sauda was convicted of rape in 2017. His 2019 conviction for conspiring to murder a journalist was overturned on appeal in 2026 and is now before the Supreme Court, and the organization continued at corporate scale (section 19).

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



1984 and its unresolved justice are real, and they are invoked to make internal criticism look like piling on.

How it runs.

1. Persecution is documented: the martyrdoms under Mughal rule, and in 1984 Operation Blue Star, the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the anti-Sikh massacres (section 5).
2. The memory binds the community, and unresolved justice shapes politics to this day (section 5).
3. An internal critic is told that he is forgetting the sacrifices made for him and dishonoring the panth (techniques 6 and 11).
4. Criticism of caste, dera abuse or committee finances is turned into division or disloyalty (section 12, stage 4; technique 17).
5. The committees and deras go unexamined, the grievance stays open, and solidarity is called on again.

Techniques that feed it. 6 · Gaslighting, 11 · Projection, 17 · Smear Campaign, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling.

Why it closes. The grievance is real and was not caused by the institution, which makes it hard to argue with. Once criticism is framed as disloyalty to the panth, the people best placed to raise an internal problem are the ones discouraged from doing so (techniques 7 and 11).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the memory and the institution are kept apart, so that criticism of a committee is not treated as criticism of the panth. Technique 7 names that framing. Those who apply it are family members, elders and committee loyalists (technique 16). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. A person says community honor feels controlling, and the answer becomes, "You are forgetting the sacrifices made for you" (technique 6).

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

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

14 Say versus do

BEFORE YOU READ

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

What they say, what the record shows

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Sikhism rejects caste absolutely.	Caste-based gurdwaras exist, and inter-caste marriage still ends families.	ACADEMIC SOURCE
Women are fully equal in Sikhi.	Women are largely absent from senior committee and kirtan roles at the historic gurdwaras.	PATTERN OBSERVED
Female infanticide is a grave sin.	Punjab developed one of India's most skewed sex ratios.	GOVERNMENT REPORT

The Guru Granth Sahib is the only Guru.	Deras with millions of followers operate on living-guru authority and are courted by political parties.	COURT RECORD

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. A convicted dera chief's organization continued operating, and its political patrons were unrepentant.

Who holds the chair now. Gurdwara committees, jathedars and dera families hold it.

Prediction. The next scandal will be answered with an edict against the person who raised it, and the golak accounts will still not be published.

Words used here

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS INSIDE	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Panthic unity	It means the solidarity of the community.	It is a real and hard-won value, invoked to close discussion of the political capture of the panth's own institutions.	'Not in front of outsiders.'
Sewa	It means selfless service.	It is one of the most genuinely admirable concepts in this codex. Watch only for the case where it is invoked to obtain unpaid labour for institutions with substantial revenue.	'Work for free for something that is not poor.'

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

- An Amritdhari who lapses faces community standing costs; family honor economies police marriage and appearance; and leaving a dera can mean losing an entire service-and-employment ecosystem.

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Formal religious penalty	Rare	No clergy can excommunicate an ordinary member; chhaikka is used mainly against public figures.	The official position is that there is little formal exit penalty, and that is accurate.
Family and honor	Yes	Cutting hair, removing a turban, or marrying outside caste or faith triggers family rupture.	“That's Punjabi culture, not Sikhi.”
Community standing	Moderate	Leaving affects gurdwara social networks, marriage prospects and business trust in tight diaspora communities.	“Everyone is welcome in a gurdwara.”
Dera exit	Yes	A person who leaves loses an entire service, housing and employment ecosystem and is labeled a traitor to the guru.	“Following a saint is voluntary.”

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Medium	Scripture and the Rehat Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct) are published, and they mostly forbid the coercion that occurs.
Informal enforcement	High	Honor, marriage networks, and community reputation carry nearly everything.
Leadership distance	High	There is no clergy to hold responsible, and committees disclaim family and cultural conduct.
Doctrinal ambiguity	Low	The doctrine is unusually clear, which makes the practice gap harder to defend, not easier.
Cultural outsourcing	Very high	Caste, dowry, and sex selection are all attributed to Punjabi culture rather than Sikhism — a defense that is partly true and wholly convenient.
Volunteer enforcement	High	Relatives and community members enforce appearance and marriage norms.
Sacred secrecy	Low	Congregational openness and public scripture reading limit secrecy, which is a genuine structural strength.
Exit cost denial	Medium	'No one is forced' is largely true institutionally and much less true within families.

Sources for this section: [9]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Leaving Sikhism formally is rarely the issue. The costs come from family honor, community standing when an Amritdhari lapses, and, for dera followers, losing a whole world of service and employment. The page also records the Akal Takht excommunicating a scholar in 2003 and asking Sikhs worldwide to "snap all ties" with him. If you disagreed publicly with the Akal Takht, what would your family say?

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

- Those who benefit are gurdwara committee power-holders and the parties that capture them; dera chiefs converting devotion into vote banks courted by politicians; and family patriarchy borrowing religious sanction. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Money out, leverage back

- Dera leaders deliver bloc votes and receive political protection in exchange; the rape conviction of 2017 concerned assaults from 2002. Devotion is converted into electoral currency. COURT RECORD / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- Control of historic gurdwaras means control of very large donation flows, making religious office a party-political prize with real money attached. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- Diaspora gurdwara factions have litigated and occasionally fought over committee control — remittances from abroad are the asset being contested. COURT RECORD

Who pays

- Girls and women pay, through dowry, sex-selective abortion, and honor pressure that doctrine explicitly forbids.
- Dalit Sikhs (Sikhs from castes formerly treated as untouchable) pay, facing caste exclusion including separate gurdwaras.
- Dera followers pay, subjected to documented abuse.
- Youth who cut their hair pay, bearing family rupture over a visible marker assigned in early childhood.

- Scholars pay, excommunicated for historical research.
  INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Devotion is converted into electoral currency.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

17 Who gets hurt most

BEFORE YOU READ

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

Where the weight lands

The costs in section 15 do not fall evenly. Section 16 names the groups that pay, and the table below sets out how the cost reaches each of them and what makes it worse.

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
Girls and women	They carry dowry, sex-selective abortion and honor pressure, every one of them doctrinally forbidden.	It compounds where family standing is the family's only asset.
Dalit Sikhs	They face caste exclusion, including separate gurdwaras, against explicit scripture.	It compounds with landlessness in rural Punjab.
Dera followers	They suffer documented abuse inside total organizations.	It compounds for marginalized-caste members whose only welcome was the dera.

Young people who cut their hair	They bear family rupture over a marker assigned in early childhood.	It compounds for boys who were bullied for it and then punished for stopping.
Scholars	They are excommunicated for historical research.	It compounds with loss of every institutional position.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Girls and women come first: dowry, sex-selective abortion and honor pressure, every one of them forbidden by doctrine. Punjab's sex ratio became one of the most skewed in India. Then come Dalit Sikhs, still facing caste exclusion, including separate gurdwaras, against explicit scripture. The page calls this one of the sharpest gaps between doctrine and practice in the book. Where do you see it in your own family?

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.

Most of a gurdwara's daily work is done below the Jathedar and the SGPC, by people who carry out decisions they did not write. The table

names four middle-tier roles: what each does, what each sees, what each is asked to do, and what each could refuse.

ROLE	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Granthis (scripture readers) and kirtanis (hymn singers)	Read scripture and lead worship on modest pay	That committee politics decides who is platformed	Stay out of it	To read for a committee that will not publish accounts
Gurdwara committee members	Control the golak and the appointments	How much cash moves and how elections are fought	Keep it in the faction	To stand on a platform of published accounts
Langar sevadars (volunteers)	Feed anyone who walks in — the tradition's finest institution	Who is turned away socially even while being fed	Do nothing, and that is the point	To let caste seating reappear anywhere near the hall
Punjabi school teachers and camp leaders	Form identity in children	Which girls are being policed on appearance and marriage	Reinforce community standards	To teach honor norms the Gurus condemned

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

19 Documented cases

BEFORE YOU READ

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

Conviction of a dera leader

WHEN: 2017–2026

WHAT: The head of Dera Sacha Sauda, which is headquartered at Sirsa in Haryana with a large following in Punjab, was convicted of rape in 2017 [6]. A 2019 conviction for conspiring to murder a journalist was overturned on appeal on 7 March 2026 and is now before the Supreme Court [6]. The organization had operated at corporate scale with political protection and bloc-vote influence.

RECORD: Indian court judgments

OUTCOME: He was imprisoned. The case demonstrates the risk of the living-guru model in a tradition whose scripture ended human guruship in 1708.

TACTICS: —

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Sources for this section: [6]

Excommunication of a scholar (India, 2003)

WHEN: 2003

WHAT: In a hukamnama (a formal edict), the Akal Takht excommunicated Gurbaksh Singh Kala Afghana, a writer whose book series it held to be "ridiculing the Sikh ethos, values and scriptures" [4].

RECORD: Akal Takht *hukamnama*, 10 July 2003 [4]

OUTCOME: Sikhs in India and abroad were asked to "snap all ties" with him and to keep him from speaking at public gatherings [4].

TACTICS: 17 · Smear Campaign, 28 · Discard

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

The Jathedar of the Akal Takht removed (India, 2025)

WHEN: 2025

WHAT: The SGPC removed Giani Raghbir Singh as Jathedar of the Akal Takht in March 2025 and appointed an acting Jathedar [3].

RECORD: ThePrint, 7 March 2025 [3]

OUTCOME: The highest seat of Sikh authority was changed by a body whose own members had not been elected since 2011 [13].

TACTICS: 29 · Replacement, 30 · Plausible Deniability

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

The kirpan in the classroom (Canada, 2001–2006)

WHEN: 2001–2006

WHAT: A Montreal school board refused to let Gurbaj Singh Multani wear his kirpan, even sealed inside his clothing [12].

RECORD: *Multani v. Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys*, 2006 SCC 6 [12]

OUTCOME: The Supreme Court of Canada declared the ban null as a breach of freedom of religion [12].

TACTICS: —

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Four 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
Scriptural guruship itself — ending human succession in 1708	Guru Gobind Singh	1708	It cost nothing, and it is the most deliberate anti-control act in this codex.
Langar as radical equality, still functioning daily worldwide	The tradition, continuously	Since the founding	It cost nothing.
Rape conviction of a dera leader with mass following and political protection	Two women followers who complained, and the journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati, who published an anonymous letter about the allegations and was shot in 2002 [6]	2002–2026	It cost a life. The 2019 conviction for his murder was overturned on appeal in March 2026; that appeal did not concern the 2017 rape conviction [6].
Diaspora gurdwaras registered as charities, which must file public accounts above the income threshold in England and Wales [18]	Not recorded on this page	Ongoing	Not recorded on this page. This page names no gurdwara that has made the change.

What would change this page

An Akal Takht Jathedar serving a full, undisturbed term across a change in SGPC political control, or a general SGPC election held on schedule, would revise the political-capture finding at the top of this page.

Sources for this section: [6]

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

- **Gurbaksh Singh Kala Afghana.** A writer, he was excommunicated by the Akal Takht in 2003 [4].
- **Jaswant Singh Khalra.** A human-rights defender, he uncovered thousands of secret cremations of Sikhs by the Punjab Police; police abducted and murdered him in 1995, and six officers were convicted at trial; on appeal in 2007 five convictions were upheld and one officer was acquitted [13].
- **Gurbaj Singh Multani.** A schoolboy, he brought the kirpan case in which the Supreme Court of Canada held that a total ban on a sealed kirpan at school was unconstitutional [12].
- **The Punjabi voters** are those whose roll fell by almost half while waiting for an SGPC election [2].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

22 Regional variants

BEFORE YOU READ

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

India (Punjab)

APEX: The Akal Takht Jathedar is the apex, appointed by the SGPC [3].

LAW: The Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925 makes the SGPC an elected body [1].

DOCUMENTED: The record covers the overdue election and the roll that fell by almost half [1][2] and the Jathedar removal [3].

EXIT: Leaving is legally free, but there are social costs where family and village life centre on the gurdwara.

REGULATOR: The Gurdwara Election Commission is the regulator and must call the SGPC election [1].

TELL: A religious body has a statutory vote that has not been held for fifteen years.

Canada

APEX: Gurdwara committees are the apex, and there is no national authority.

LAW: The Charter protects freedom of religion [12].

DOCUMENTED: The record is *Multani* (2006) [12].

EXIT: Leaving is legally free.

REGULATOR: The courts are the regulator.

TELL: The kirpan case protects every religious minority, not only Sikhs.

United Kingdom

APEX: Gurdwara committees are the apex, and many are registered as charities.

LAW: Charity law applies.

DOCUMENTED: —

EXIT: Leaving is legally free.

REGULATOR: The Charity Commission is the regulator in England and Wales.

TELL: Where a gurdwara is a registered charity in England and Wales, it must file accounts with the Charity Commission above the income threshold [18]; Scottish charities answer to a different regulator, OSCR.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers India (Punjab), Canada and the United Kingdom. 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

Guru Gobind Singh ended human guruship. Explain how a living dera guru is anything other than the thing he abolished.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Guru Gobind Singh ended human guruship, and the Guru Granth Sahib is the Guru. A living dera guru reintroduces what was abolished. The question asks followers to reconcile the two.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The cases section records the conviction for rape in 2017 of the head of Dera Sacha Sauda, a dera based in Haryana with a large following in Punjab, and concludes that it "demonstrates the risk of the living-guru model in a tradition whose scripture ended human guruship in 1708."

QUESTION 2 OF 6

Your scripture rejects caste. Ask why your family will not accept the marriage, and ask them to cite a line.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

If scripture rejects caste, a family's objection to an inter-caste marriage has to come from somewhere else. The question asks the family to cite a line.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The glance table's unanswered question: "The Gurus abolished caste five centuries ago. Why do the panth's own matrimonial pages still sort by it?" The say-do table records that caste-based gurdwaras exist.

QUESTION 3 OF 6

Ask your gurdwara committee for the golak accounts. Note whether the answer is a number or an insult.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

The golak is sacred giving. The question asks whether a committee elected to manage it will show the accounts.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The structure table records that the SGPC presidency "controls the golak revenues of the historic gurdwaras — the acknowledged prize of the elections."

QUESTION 4 OF 6

Female infanticide is condemned outright in your tradition. Ask why Punjab's sex ratio says what it says, and who was silent.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

When a practice condemned by doctrine produces measurable population effects, someone was silent. The question asks who.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The reach section records that female-selective abortion produced severely skewed sex ratios in Punjab "despite clear doctrinal condemnation," one of the sharpest gaps between doctrine and practice in the book.

QUESTION 5 OF 6

A dera leader was convicted of rape. Name a Sikh political figure who returned his support and said why.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Political support for a powerful dera buys votes. After a conviction, withdrawing that support publicly would be an act of principle. The question asks whether any politician did it.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The cases section records that the dera had operated at corporate scale with political reach, that its head was convicted of rape in 2017, and that he remains imprisoned.

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You were taught these are cultural matters, not religious ones. Ask why culture always wins when it conflicts with your Gurus.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Calling a practice "cultural" shields it from religious criticism. The question notices that culture wins whenever it conflicts with the Gurus.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The say-do table sets "Sikhism rejects caste absolutely" beside caste-based gurdwaras, and "Women are fully equal in Sikhi" beside women's near-absence from senior committee and kirtan roles at the historic gurdwaras.

In closing

In structural terms your tradition gives you an unusual position among the readers of this codex. No priest can absolve you, no clergy can expel you, your scripture is in your hands and read aloud in public, and langar seats everyone on the same floor by design. The machinery in your community is not built into your religion — it was smuggled in alongside it.

Which means your work is not deconstruction. It is enforcement. Most of the abuses in this profile are already forbidden by your own doctrine; others, such as how a committee keeps its accounts, are not addressed in scripture and have to be asked for. You do not need a new belief; you need to hold your community to the one it already claims.

Sources for this section: [1] [2]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

24 Leaving safely here

BEFORE YOU READ

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

Practical guidance, not legal advice.

1. **Leaving is legally free;** the costs are family and community.

2. **If you face forced marriage or honour-based abuse,** use specialist help [15].
3. **An excommunication** is a religious sanction issued by the Akal Takht [4]. This page cites no legal source on its legal effect, so take advice if one is used against you.
4. **Find support** from the organizations listed in section 25 [14] [16] [17].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

25 Where to get help

BEFORE YOU READ

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

Checked 2026-09-27.

ORGANIZATION	FOR	WHERE	CONTACT
Faith to Faithless	People leaving religion	UK	**0800 448 0748** (freephone; Monday 10:00–13:00, Wednesday 10:00–13:00, Thursday 16:00–19:00 UK time) [14]
Karma Nirvana	Honour-based abuse, forced marriage	UK	**0800 5999 247** [15]
Recovering from Religion	People questioning or leaving faith	US, Canada and online	**(844) 368-2848** [16]
NAPAC	Adult survivors of childhood abuse	UK	**0808 801 0331** [17]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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



26

Sources

BEFORE YOU READ

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

1. ThePrint, "How SGPC, the 'mini parliament of Sikhs', conducts elections & its inextricable link to Punjab politics" (2025 — last general election 2011; five-year term under the Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925). https://theprint.in/statedraft/how-sgpc-the-mini-parliament-of-sikhs-conducts-elections-its-inextricable-link-to-punjab-politics/2380569/
2. ThePrint, "SGPC's electoral roll declines by 50% since 2011" (~52 lakh voters in 2011 to ~27.9 lakh in 2024). https://theprint.in/india/declining-faith-or-trust-deficit-sgpcs-electoral-roll-declines-by-50-since-2011/2030339/
3. ThePrint, "Giani Raghbir Singh removed as Jathedar of Akal Takht; Kuldeep Singh appointed as acting Jathedar" (7 Mar 2025). https://theprint.in/india/giani-raghbir-singh-removed-as-jathedar-of-akal-takht-kuldeep-singh-appointed-as-acting-jathedar/2538170/
4. Akal Takht *hukamnama* excommunicating Gurbaksh Singh Kala Afghana (10 July 2003) — WWRN report. https://wwrn.org/articles/3907/
5. Census of India 2011 — Punjab child sex ratio 846 girls per 1,000 boys (798 in 2001) — World Bank Punjab gender brief. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/392981504172754967/pdf/119257-BRI-P157572-Punjab-Gender.pdf
6. Newsgram, "Punjab and Haryana HC acquits Gurmeet Ram Rahim in Chhatrapati murder case" (7 Mar 2026) — Dera Sacha Sauda head: special CBI court rape conviction (2017); life sentence for the murder of Ram Chander Chhatrapati (2019) overturned by the High Court on 7 March 2026; dera headquartered at Sirsa, Haryana. https://www.newsgram.com/law-order/2026/03/07/punjab-haryana-hc-acquits-gurmeet-ram-rahim-chhatrapati-murder-case

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9. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, *Sikh Rehat Maryada* (the code of conduct; women's full participation). https://sgpc.net/sikh-rehat-maryada-in-english/

Further sources

10. *The Tribune*, "SGPC passes Rs 1,261 crore annual budget" (2024) — 2023–24 budget ₹1,138.14 crore; 2022–23 ₹988 crore. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/amritsar/sgpc-passes-rs-1-261-crore-annual-budget-605395

11. *The Tribune*, "SGPC passes budget of Rs 1,386.47 crore for 2025-2026 financial year" (2025) — 2024–25 ₹1,260.97 crore. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/amritsar/sgpc-passes-budget-of-rs-1386-47-crore-for-2025-2026-financial-year/

12. David Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights, *Multani v. Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys*, [2006] 1 S.C.R. 256 — summary. https://jackmanlaw.utoronto.ca/asper/multani-v-commission-scolaire-marguerite-bourgeoys

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15. Karma Nirvana — honour-based abuse and forced marriage, 0800 5999 247. https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/helpline/

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

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

18. GOV.UK, Charity Commission, "Charity reporting and accounting: the essentials" (CC15d) — charities with income over £25,000 file their annual report and accounts with the Commission, and every charity must make its accounts available on request; the Commission regulates England and Wales. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-accounts/charity-reporting-and-accounting-the-essentials-november-2016-cc15d--2

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 Akal Takht Jathedar removal (one removal, in March 2025, not two) and the dera leader's case, which now says his 2019 murder-conspiracy conviction was overturned and that the dera is headquartered in Haryana. Removed the claim that diaspora gurdwara boards are transparent and the unsourced court case in the opening scene. Fixed the SGPC budget growth percentage and the electoral-roll fall (about 46%, not half). Re-graded four techniques whose evidence was family pressure rather than a document, so the page now counts no technique as sourced to a named document. Rewrote the Khalra appeal outcome, the Canadian kirpan ruling and the note on legal effect of excommunication, and replaced a source that pointed to another page.
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers (SGPC budgets 2022–2026), three more documented cases, Voices from inside, three regional cards, Leaving safely and Where to get help.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

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

Colophon

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

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