

THE SAME MACHINE, EVERY HOUSE

How the control-and-abuse pattern surfaces in every major tradition — Mormon, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and the new secular cults — why all of them converge on it, and why it consumes women, children, and men alike

Cross-faith analysis · companion to the series

Prepared for Kristen Hall · June 2026

Read this first. This document is about the high-control, abusive corner of each tradition — not the tradition itself, and not the billions who practice their faith without harming anyone. Mainstream belief is not the target here; the predatory pattern that hides inside it is. Naming that pattern in one faith and not another would be dishonest. Naming it everywhere, fairly, is the point: it belongs to no religion because it belongs to all of them — and to plenty of things that aren't religions at all.

Why “all of them” is not a coincidence. These groups never coordinated. They arrive at the same machine independently, the way unrelated animals evolve the same eye — because they face the same problem (how to hold members and reproduce across generations) and the same few brutal solutions work: claim an unverifiable divine authority, gate salvation through the leader, install the fear of leaving, and seize control of reproduction and children. Any system that didn't evolve some of these tended to lose its people and die. The cruelty is selected for. That is the root you asked for.

Contents

Mormon Fundamentalism — and the Boys It Throws Away

The FLDS (distinct from the mainstream Latter-day Saint church, which disavowed polygamy in 1890) is the clearest illustration that this machine devours everyone. Its prophet, Warren Jeffs, is serving life plus twenty years for sexually assaulting girls of twelve and fifteen he took as “brides.” But the part that proves your point about men is the Lost Boys.

Polygamy creates a math problem: if powerful men take many wives, there aren't enough women for everyone, so the surplus young men have to go. Over roughly a decade the FLDS expelled an estimated 400 to 1,400 teenage boys — some as young as thirteen — for trivial “offenses” like watching a movie, listening to music, or talking to a girl. Many were dumped on roadsides, cut off from their families, and told they would never see them again or enter heaven. A lawsuit by six of them named it plainly: the systematic excommunication of young males to reduce competition for wives. Cast into a world they'd been taught was evil, many fell into addiction, despair, and suicide.

The lesson. Women are controlled, girls are married off, and boys are discarded as surplus. Everyone is fuel. The system doesn't love any of them — it uses each according to what it needs.

Christianity — From the Diet Church to the Largest Institution on Earth

The Christian world shows the full range, from a homegrown cult to the planet's biggest religious body. Gwen Shamblin Lara turned a faith-based weight-loss program into the Remnant Fellowship, positioning herself as the prophet under whose authority everything fell; former members describe brainwashing, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, bans on psychiatric medication, and a child-discipline culture that drew investigation after a member couple were convicted of their eight-year-old son's abuse death.

But the pattern is not confined to fringe sects. The Catholic clergy sexual-abuse crisis is the largest documented case of the machine in history: not only the abuse of countless children by priests, but a global institutional reflex to protect the institution — moving offenders, silencing victims, and treating the reputation of the church as more sacred than the children in its care. That second part, the cover-up, is the machine showing its true priority. Independent Fundamental Baptist networks and prosperity-gospel empires run smaller versions of the same play: unquestionable male authority, fear, and finances shielded from scrutiny.

Islam — The Polygamy Question, Handled Honestly

This is where care matters most, because the topic gets distorted in both directions. The honest facts cut against the easy story:

- **Polygamy is rare and not distinctively Islamic.** About 2% of the world's population lives in polygamous households. The highest rates are in West and Central Africa — practiced there across Muslims, Christians, and folk-religion followers alike. Where it's common, people of all faiths do it.

- **Islam restricted a pre-existing practice.** Pre-Islamic Arabia had unlimited polygamy; Islamic law capped it at four and attached a fairness condition the Quran itself frames as nearly impossible — if you fear you cannot be just, marry only one. Many scholars read the text as favoring monogamy.
- **Most Muslims and many Muslim states reject unrestricted polygamy.** Only an estimated 10–15% of Muslims practice it even where it's legal. Turkey banned it in 1926; Tunisia bans it; Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia impose strict conditions such as the first wife's consent. In 2018 the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar — among the highest authorities in Sunni Islam — publicly condemned the harm polygamy does to women and children.

What this means for the pattern. The harm is never “Islam.” The harm is coercion — forced marriage, child marriage, the erasure of a woman's consent — and coercion is cross-cultural, showing up in FLDS Mormonism, in some African Christian and traditional contexts, in the histories of Judaism and Hinduism, and in the gender-control regimes of extremist movements like the Taliban and ISIS. That extremist corner runs the identical machine. But conflating it with the everyday faith of nearly two billion people isn't analysis — it's bigotry, and polygamy has in fact been weaponized to fuel anti-Muslim hatred. The accurate position refuses both the apologist's denial and the bigot's smear: coercive control of women's bodies is the crime, it flies many religious flags, and Islam holds neither a monopoly on it nor an exemption from it.

Hinduism — The “Godmen”

India's self-styled “godmen” are among the most concentrated examples anywhere. Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, leader of the Dera Sacha Sauda and claimant of tens of millions of followers, was convicted in 2017 of raping two female disciples (twenty years), then convicted of ordering the 2002 murder of a journalist who exposed the abuse; when he was convicted, his followers rioted and dozens died, and former insiders alleged a network that supplied him victims and even forced castrations of male followers. Asaram Bapu, who built an empire of hundreds of schools, was convicted in 2018 of raping a teenage devotee and sentenced to life. Others — Rampal, Nithyananda — follow the same arc: a man declared a living embodiment of God, vows of purity as the public face, and sexual exploitation and violence behind it, protected for years by devotees who could not let the belief die.

Buddhism — The Teacher and the Code of Silence

Even the tradition with the gentlest global image is not exempt. Sogyal Rinpoche, founder of the international Rigpa network and author of a hugely influential book on death, was accused by multiple women of sexual assault, rape, and physical violence; in 2017, eight long-term students published an open letter detailing years of abuse, and he was forced to retire. Reporting noted he had no formal monastic training despite a carefully built mythic reputation, and that the surrounding institution maintained a code of silence that protected him for decades. Similar reckonings have hit other Buddhist communities. The lesson: the costume can be serene and the machine still runs — an unquestionable enlightened authority, devotees taught that their doubts are their own spiritual failing, and an institution that guards the guru over the harmed.

Judaism — The High-Control Fringe

Mainstream Judaism is not the subject; its high-control fringe is. Lev Tahor, an extremist sect sometimes called “the Jewish Taliban,” has been documented imposing severe control over women and children, and several of its leaders were convicted in U.S. federal court of crimes including kidnapping connected to the taking of children. More broadly, the most insular ultra-Orthodox enclaves can exhibit the familiar features — tight information control, punishing of doubt, and steep costs for leaving — which is why ex-member support networks exist specifically to help people who go “off the path” rebuild outside. As everywhere, this describes a controlling minority, not a faith.

The New Secular Cults — You Don't Even Need a God

The most revealing cases drop the deity entirely and run the identical machine. Scientology is the clearest. Its clergy, the Sea Org, sign billion-year contracts; its internal punishment camp, the Rehabilitation Project Force, has been described by researchers as forced labor and re-education that meets the criteria of brainwashing — members are broken down to the status of “degraded being,” then rebuilt in the image the organization wants. Auditing sessions extract intimate confessions later usable as leverage; “disconnection” forces members to cut off doubting family; critics are declared “suppressive persons.” A 2026 lawsuit accuses the organization of trafficking and exploiting children, with thousands of minors reportedly having worked under these conditions. Because of its religious status, labor and child-protection laws have often failed to reach inside.

And below Scientology sits a whole retail tier — multi-level marketing “families,” wellness and manifestation gurus, ascension influencers — selling the same product with no theology at all: you are broken, the outside is dangerous, and only we can complete you.

The Prophet Beyond Accountability — Ruling Through Cruelty

Across all of these houses, the most dangerous single ingredient is the same: one person elevated to unquestionable, divinely-sanctioned authority. Once a figure becomes “the prophet” — or simply un-criticizable — whatever he does is holy by definition, and the cruelty that follows is recast as righteousness. Warren Jeffs is the clearest religious case in these files; the most extreme modern versions are the militias that rule purely through terror.

Groups like the self-styled Islamic State (ISIS) and Boko Haram wrapped abduction, forced marriage, and the sexual enslavement of women and girls — some as young as twelve — in religious language. The United Nations documented this as a deliberate tactic of terror; UN officials observed that by forcing “marriage” and childbearing on captives, Boko Haram was waging war on women's autonomy precisely in order to raise the next generation in its own image. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch recorded the same pattern in ISIS's treatment of Yazidi and other women and girls. These are war crimes, not theology.

Extremists — and disowned as such. This is the violent, controlling fringe, and the world's Muslims said so publicly: groups of imams issued appeals against joining ISIS, and senior Muslim figures issued a formal fatwa denouncing its enslavement of women, children, and minorities. The abusers claimed a faith; the faith's own authorities repudiated them. That distinction is the entire point of this document.

The fairness rule, held firmly. Child marriage and polygamy are human abuses, not one faith's signature. Polygamy is rare worldwide (about 2% of people), cross-cultural, restricted or banned in most Muslim-majority countries, and condemned from within Islam by authorities as senior as the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. Child marriage is driven by poverty and patriarchy — concentrated in parts of Africa and South Asia, found across Christian, Hindu, and secular contexts, and outlawed in many Muslim nations. To pin these on Islam, or on the world's ordinary Muslims who practice neither, is not analysis — it is bigotry, and it discredits every true thing standing beside it.

And you don't even need a god. The same cult-of-personality structure appears in secular institutions. Dov Charney built the fashion brand American Apparel into an empire and, by many accounts, a cult of personality around himself — a Netflix documentary is titled “Trainwreck: The Cult of American Apparel.” He faced a series of sexual-harassment lawsuits from former employees and was ousted as CEO in 2014 amid misconduct allegations the company detailed in court filings. Charney has denied wrongdoing, maintains his relationships were consensual, and has never been found liable for harassment in court. Whatever the verdicts, the shape is unmistakable: a charismatic founder placed above the rules everyone beneath him had to follow.

Why Women, Children, and Men

Your instinct that everyone gets hurt is exactly right, and each in a specific way, because each is needed for something different.

- **Women — because controlling reproduction means controlling them.** A system that perpetuates itself must control who is born, so women's bodies, fertility, marriages, and autonomy become the prize and the battleground: plural and forced and child marriage, purity codes, mandated submission.
- **Children — because they are the next generation of members.** They are the most malleable and the least able to refuse, so the program is installed before they can question it; in the worst cases the control turns into outright abuse, because capturing the child is how the system survives the death of the adult.
- **Men — because they are labor, enforcers, or surplus.** Loyal men are worked to exhaustion and used to police everyone else; inconvenient men — the FLDS Lost Boys — are thrown away when they compete with the powerful for women. No one is spared; people are simply sorted by use.

The Verdict

Seven different houses — Mormon, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and godless — and one machine wearing seven sets of robes. None of them invented it; each rediscovered it, because the

exploit is in the human animal, not in any one scripture. That is the answer to why this keeps happening: it isn't a plot handed down from a single source, it's a pattern that any belief-system drifts toward when it starts to value its own survival and power over the people inside it.

What to do with this. Hold the line you've held all along: it is not about which religion. Name the operators one at a time, as the courts have done — Jeffs, Shamblin, the godmen, the gurus, the orgs — and protect their victims. But don't indict the faith of ordinary believers, and don't let anyone use this to target a whole people. The cure is the same in every house: direct, unmediated access — a person who knows their worth and their safety were never anyone else's to grant or revoke, and who therefore cannot be bought, frightened, or owned.

Sources

Court records and mainstream reporting; verify specifics against originals where precision matters.

Mormon fundamentalism / Lost Boys

Slate — systematic expulsion of boys to reduce competition for wives:

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2008/04/how-does-the-flds-supply-three-wives-for-every-man.html>

Deseret News — six “lost boys” sue the FLDS: <https://www.deseret.com/2004/8/30/19847676/6-lost-boys-sue-flds-church/>

Wikipedia — Lost boys (Mormon fundamentalism):

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_boys_\(Mormon_fundamentalism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_boys_(Mormon_fundamentalism))

Christianity

Gwen Shamblin Lara / Remnant Fellowship (Wikipedia): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwen_Shamblin_Lara

NewsChannel 5 — Remnant investigations:

<https://www.newschannel5.com/news/newschannel-5-investigates/before-hbo-max-explore-newschannel-5s-gwen-shamblin-remnant-fellowship-investigations>

Islam / polygamy in context

Pew Research — polygamy is rare and concentrated, practiced across faiths:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/12/07/polygamy-is-rare-around-the-world-and-mostly-confined-to-a-few-regions/>

Scroll.in — how Muslim countries regulate/ban polygamy: <https://scroll.in/article/873813/as-supreme-court-decides-on-banning-polygamy-a-look-at-how-muslim-countries-deal-with-the-practice>

MyPluralist — polygamy weaponized for Islamophobia; Quran favors monogamy:

<https://mypluralist.com/2025/10/02/polygamy-islam-myths-reality/>

Musawah — Al-Azhar Grand Imam on the harm of polygamy: <https://campaignforjustice.musawah.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Policy-Brief-3-Ending-Polygamy-1.pdf>

Hinduism / Buddhism

CNN — Gurmeet Ram Rahim and Asaram Bapu convictions: <https://www.cnn.com/2026/02/06/india/india-singh-dera-sacha-sauda-parole-intl-hnk-dst>

CBS News — Asaram Bapu convicted of raping teen devotee: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/india-guru-asaram-bapu-convicted-of-rape-of-teen-devotee-as-in-iodhpur>

The Daily Beast — Sogyal Rinpoche / Rigpa abuse: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/inside-tibetan-buddhisms-rape-and-abuse-scandal/>

Scientology

Extremist forced marriage / enslavement — UN report (Global News):

<https://globalnews.ca/news/1936926/extremists-using-rape-sexual-slavery-forced-marriage-as-terror-tactics-un>

Amnesty — ISIS abuse of Yazidi women and girls (NBC): <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/isis-raped-sold-yazidi-women-girls-sex-report-n273716>

Human Rights Watch — IS abuse of women; Muslim leaders' fatwa against IS:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/11/25/silence-over-islamic-states-abuse-women>

Dov Charney / American Apparel — ouster and allegations (Biography):

<https://www.biography.com/business-leaders/a65092365/dov-charney-now-american-apparel-scandal>

American Apparel court filings; Charney denials (CNBC): <https://www.cnbc.com/2015/06/24/american-apparel-details-allegations-of-sexual-misconduct-by-ousted-ceo.html>

Variety — “Going Clear” and Sea Org abuse: <https://variety.com/2015/film/news/sundance-going-clear-scientology-documentary-tom-cruise-john-travolta-abuse-1201416017/>

Stephen Kent — brainwashing in the RPF: <https://skent.ualberta.ca/contributions/scientology/brainwashing-in-scientologys-rehabilitation-project-force-rpf/>

Cohen Milstein — trafficking/forced-labor suit, child exploitation claims:

<https://www.cohenmilstein.com/church-scientology-accused-human-trafficking-forced-labor/>

Companion to the series. Compiled from court records and mainstream reporting, June 2026. Concerns documented abuse; details kept factual and non-graphic. Describes high-control minorities, not whole faiths or their members.