

The following comprises extracts from Temple of The Jedi Order's Application to the UK Charity Commission but it also serves as a good summary of who we are, what we believe, and how we operate.

Purposes:

Object #1 "To advance the religion of Jediism, for the public benefit worldwide, in accordance with the Jedi Doctrine." Definitions: Jediism is a religion based on the observance of the Force, the ubiquitous and metaphysical power that a Jedi (a follower of Jediism) believes to be the underlying, fundamental nature of the universe. Jediism sources its terminology in the books, films and video games comprising the "Star Wars" fictional universe. However, Jedi do not worship George Lucas or Star Wars or anything of the sort. Although we accept that myth can be an effective method of conveying philosophies applicable to real life, Jediism is not based on fiction.

Rather, Jediism draws on the wisdom of many faiths, including, but not limited to: Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Sufism, Judaism, and Paganism. Jediism also draws on a number of philosophical currents including the existential phenomenology of Heidegger, Kierkegaard and Buber. It is a religion in its own right by virtue of its unique mythology, doctrine, tenets and maxims. It also has unique social and experiential dimensions. The Jedi religion is an inspiration and a way of life for many people throughout the world who take on the mantle of Jedi. Jedi apply the principles, ideals, philosophies and teachings of Jediism in a practical manner within their lives. The Temple Of The Jedi Order is already a recognised International Ministry and Public Charity in the USA (Employer Identification Number :20-3995682; DLN:26053678005915).

Jedi believe: In the Force, and in the inherent worth of all life within it. In the sanctity of the human person. We oppose the use of torture and cruel or unusual punishment, including the death penalty. In a society governed by laws grounded in reason and compassion, not in fear or prejudice. In a society that does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or circumstances of birth such as gender, ethnicity and national origin. In the ethic of reciprocity, and how moral concepts are not absolute but vary by culture, religion and over time. In the positive influence of spiritual growth and awareness on society. In the importance of freedom of conscience and self-determination within religious, political and other structures. In the separation of religion and government and the freedoms of speech, association and expression.

Our 3 Tenets are: Focus, Knowledge and Wisdom The Jedi Creed is: I am a Jedi, an instrument of peace; Where there is hatred I shall bring love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; And where there is sadness, joy. I am a Jedi. I shall never seek so much to be consoled as to console; To be understood as to understand; To be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. The Force is with me always, for I am a Jedi. The Jedi Code: Emotion, yet Peace. Ignorance, yet Knowledge. Passion, yet Serenity. Chaos, yet Harmony. Death, yet the Force.

The Powers: We firmly believe that everyone in the world has the potential to become a Jedi. Our resources, teachings, religious services and forums are all available online at www.templeofthejediorder.org for no charge. Temple Of The Jedi Order is established as a 501(c)3 non-profit organisation in the United States of America.

Teaching is conducted by a combination of clergy members, and lay members who have completed Initiate Program and Apprenticeship phases of their own training. Typically, this teaching is conducted remotely (although occasionally in person) and makes use of a wide range of media and

resources. Many people search for teaching at TOTJO looking to improve themselves and/or their life circumstances, with a confusion surrounding the religious or spiritual guidance they've had in the past. Whilst they may see life circumstance improvement outcomes as a side-effect, our teaching does not address such matters directly.

The core of our teaching may seem counter-intuitive but in line with Mahayana Buddhist teachings, our role is to help people realise that they, every single one of them, do not need to be improved – we merely teach them to appreciate their potential, and provide them with tools to realise it. We firmly believe that full potential can be realised as we learn to live in and with the World, rather than fight against it. As Carl Sagan said “We are a way for the Universe to know itself”, and as Jedi, we believe that the power to recognise this on a continuous basis is gifted to us by The Force. Our teachings do not convert anyone to Jediism from something else (be that a religion, or philosophical movement).

The teachings can, and are, used by people on a 'stand-alone' basis or in tandem with a full involvement in other religious movements. Who can get involved? All guests are welcome providing they adhere to the website codes of conduct and all guests are free to apply for full membership at any time, should they wish to. Temple of the Jedi Order has over 20,000 members and has been established as an online community for over 10 years. Object #2: To advance such charitable purposes (according to the law of England and Wales) as the Trustees see fit from time to time. Available funds left over after expenditure achieving Object #1 may be used for Object #2, according to the terms of the Grant Making Policy of Temple Of The Jedi Order.

Purpose and Public Benefit Part 1

1. What does your organisation do to achieve its purpose? Help us to understand how the trustees advance the organisation's purpose by telling us exactly what the organisation does and how. Please do not provide detail of fundraising activities here. You can explain how your organisation is funded at the Finance and Funding section.

Temple Of The Jedi Order provide a safe, online space for anyone to explore non-denominational spirituality at www.templeofthejediorder.org .

1. Teaching is conducted by a combination of clergy members, and lay members who have passed Initiate Program and Apprenticeship phases of their own training. Typically this teaching is conducted remotely through our website forums and other social media channels (although occasionally in person) and makes use of a wide range of resources. The Initiate Program consists of 8 self-paced lessons and typically takes no less than 60 days to complete, but the average time taken by members is about 6 months, with many taking longer. Lessons include: Temple Structure, The Role of Myth in Society, The Nature of the Self, Introduction to Meditation Techniques, The Ubiquity of Connection, Temple Doctrine, The Study of Major World Religions, Personal Tools for Self Development, and a series of lessons on Jediism itself. Those who have completed the Initiate Program become eligible to begin an Apprenticeship with a senior member of the Temple (a 'Knight'). These take a minimum of 6 months to complete and are tailored to the Apprentice's needs and interests. We currently have hundreds of Apprentice lessons in a 'Lesson Bank' on our website. The successful completion of an Apprenticeship results in the member becoming a 'Knight' and potentially eligible to start teaching. We also conduct training for our Clergy through the Seminary section of our website.

2. Religious Services: Religious Services are conducted at least once a week (but often twice a week) in our website's 'live chat' area, by members of our clergy. A sermon is given and all participants

recite our creed together. All sermons are then stored for future reference and are available for all, through our website.

3. Community Forums: We have over 200,000 posts in our community forums on a diverse range of topics associated with Jediism. Here anyone can discuss doctrine, training methods, teaching methods, set-up groups with special interests and so on.

4. Distribution of Information and Media: The knowledge base in the Temple, is deep and diverse. Much of the study conducted at The Temple involves research into other religions and philosophies and how they can help us remove obstacles to human potential, understand the world we live in and understand the nature of existence. Although this study is academic in orientation, Jediism is incredibly inclusive and many different voices and viewpoints are accepted. The information and media used are often already used by other religions, and in the context of other ethical or moral frameworks where they are in line with the Jedi Doctrine.

5. Seeking New Members: "Jediism is not particularly evangelical in its message but members individually promote the Jedi Way through their thoughts, words and deeds. People find us, and choose to remain with us rather than our actively seeking to introduce or retain new members"

6. Donations to other charities: Excess funds left over after the costs of administering our website can be used for general charitable purposes on a case by case basis, as prescribed in our Grant Making Policy.

2. Tell us how your organisation's purpose is beneficial. Help us to understand the benefit to the public of your organisation's purpose by telling us what the benefits to the public are. It should always be possible to identify and describe how a charity's purpose is beneficial. This can include detail of benefits to beneficiaries or to the general public.

1. Teaching Benefits: Everyone in the world encounters their own set of obstacles. Our teaching seeks to give people the tools to identify their challenges and address them appropriately. We help people seek answers to their questions, be they relatively mundane or deeply existential, physical or mental in accordance with the Jedi Doctrine. We sincerely believe that this process helps develop a person's spirituality as well as providing a moral and ethical framework to live by. This framework offers many benefits not only to the people in question (in the form of comfort, solace, and sense of purpose) but to our wider society, in general.

2. Religious Service Benefits: Many people do not identify with the traditional major religions anymore. Our services are simple and accessible to all. Many people who thought they could never engage in sincere religious ceremony engage with our religious services. They benefit directly from the associated spiritual development but those benefits ripple far and wide due to their improved psyche and behaviour in their day to day lives. Family, friends, colleagues and anyone else they interact with will benefit from their improved state of mind even if they've never even heard of Jediism.

3. Community Forums Benefits: We are a social and communicative species, but unfortunately many people find it difficult to be heard. Our community forums provide a space and an engaged, interested audience for people to make their thoughts known, to provide and take advice and to find like-minded individuals with common interests. On these forums we discuss a wide range of beneficial activities including, but not limited to: - clearer understanding of the Jedi Doctrine - contributing towards a better society through social cohesion - carrying out, as a practical expression of our religious beliefs, other activities such as advancing education, conflict resolution, and relieving

poverty - contributing to Guests', Visitors' and Members' good mental and physical health, aiding the prevention of ill health, speeding recovery and fostering composure in the face of ill health - providing comfort to the bereaved

4. Distribution of Information and Media benefits: Spiritual development is hard but its even harder if conducted without the right materials, and the right guidance. Whilst being careful not to breach copyright law we are able to advise people on the right materials to help them in their spiritual development.

5. Pastoral Care Benefits: Our clergy, and all of those involved in the Temple, are encouraged to help those in need. Often that help comes in the form of pastoral care and support - a service that the temple takes extremely seriously. Whilst our clergy provide pastoral care at a rudimentary level via the provision of sermons, in many circumstances our members may need pastoral care provided in a one-on-one, confidential and specific context. Temple Clergy are trained in empathetic listening, in being engaged but non-judgmental. They neither admonish, nor provide advice. Their role is not to solve anyone's problems but to accompany anyone who is in need of support, as they seek solutions themselves, to let them see that they are not alone, and that they have those who care, by their side. Ordained Clergy are bound by Oath of Confidence to honour the privacy and secrecy of what is divulged in any such exchange, unless under applicable regional and national law they are given information which they must pass on to the relevant authorities.

6. Charitable Donations: Whilst we do not currently have the finances to support other charities, we fully intend to reach a financial position where this is achievable. The ways and means by which the Temple will conduct such donations are elaborated on later in the application form.

All of these benefits are provided completely free of charge.

Purpose and Public Benefit Part 2

1. Tell us about who can benefit from the organisation's purpose. Help us to understand who will benefit from your organisation's purpose. If your organisation's purpose is to benefit a section of the public it should make clear who can benefit. If this is not already made clear in the wording of the purpose tell us who can benefit from the organisation's purpose.

Anyone with access to the internet, and an email address can join the Temple and benefit from the services it offers. We do not discriminate in any way (other than as outlined below) and many people find membership does not disrupt their beliefs and participation in other religious organisations.

For practical purposes, those aged 13 or younger are not allowed to have accounts and, if any belonging to those under 13 years old are identified, they are blocked. Under 18s are also not allowed to apply for membership at the Temple, but may have membership if they give their parent or guardian's contact details to the Youth Officers. Both Youth Officers are senior, long-standing members of the Temple who have both had criminal background checks.

Those aged 13-18 have their own forum, access of which is restricted to themselves, as well as Youth Officers, and Councillors (Temple leadership).

The benefit to under 18s is that they are provided with a tightly moderated space, specifically for themselves, where they can discuss Jediism and other subjects.

Please see the vulnerable groups policies for more information.

Charitable donations made to other charities will benefit those suffering from natural or man-made disasters, or in the furtherance of Jediism, as prescribed in our Grant Making Policy.

Operating and Public Benefit Part 1

1. Tell us how you make decisions about which individuals, groups or projects to support. Help us to understand how the resources of your organisation are allocated to the public or section of the public it is set up to benefit. If you benefit individuals, specific groups or communities, tell us how you decide who to help and what criteria you use for that.

Many resources on our Temple website are available to Visitors and Guests. Additional forums are available only to Members - these mainly concern administrative matters and private tuition.

A Visitor is someone who does not have a log-in and browses, reads our materials, doctrine and public forums.

A Guest is someone with a log-in (we provide a log-in to anyone who registers with a valid email address and password). They then have the ability to post on the forums and take part in our religious services. Guests must be over 13 years of age.

A Member is someone who has made a successful membership application. The criteria for this are: To comply with the codes of conduct for the website To develop a belief in the Force. The Force resides in all, surrounds all and flows through all. To develop an acceptance for, and put into practice the Teachings and Doctrine of Jediism Has completed the Membership Application.

Operating and Public Benefit Part 2

1. Do people or organisations have to be members of your organisation to receive some or all benefits from its purpose? Please confirm yes or no. If yes, help us to understand why you operate a membership scheme and tell us: What benefits do members get? Why are those benefits limited to the members? What are the criteria for membership? Whether there is a limit on membership numbers, the reasons for this and whether membership is allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Yes - individuals need to be members in order to receive all the potential benefits, but many benefits are available to Visitors and Guests.

Whilst the majority of our resources are available to guests there are certain resources, forums and teaching only available to members.

These resources are available only to members in order to prevent any disruption from people who might look to interfere with our forums.

The criteria for membership is the completion of an application form which is a basic submission of contact details and reasons why membership is sort. Furthermore, we ask our members: To comply with all codes of conduct for the website. To develop an acceptance for the Teachings and Doctrine of Jediism.

Being an online community, there is no limitation on membership numbers.

2. Does your organisation provide facilities or services for the public as a way of advancing its purpose? Please confirm yes or no. If yes please tell us: What sort of facility or service your organisation provides. This might be a community centre, food bank, art gallery or football pitch for example. What level of public access there is to that facility or service such as opening hours or frequency of services offered. If there are any restrictions on who can have access to the facility and why. If there are any restrictions on what people can have access to the facility and why.

Yes. Our Doctrine, forums, sermons and Initiate Program training resources (amongst other things) are all available to Visitors and Guests at www.templeofthejediorder.org

Guests and members also have access to members of our clergy.

The website is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and there are no restrictions on who has access to the public website.

Operating and Public Benefit Part 3

1. Does your organisation charge people to access its services or facilities? Please confirm yes or no. If yes, help us to understand whether those charges exclude the poor from benefit and tell us: What services or facilities you charge for; The level of charges made; Whether or not the trustees consider the charges to be more than the poor can afford and their reasons for deciding this. Where the trustees consider the charges to be more than the poor can afford: What provision they make for the poor to benefit and the factors they have considered in making their decisions about the level and type of provision to make for the poor to benefit.

No

2. Tell us if you (or if you are aware of others who) have identified any risks of possible detriment or harm that might result from your organisation's purpose or how your organisation will carry out its purpose. Please confirm yes or no. If yes please tell us: What the detriment or harm is; How the organisation intends to minimise the detriment or harm; How you protect any vulnerable groups including children that your organisation works with; and any risk management policies you have in place such as a child protection policy, or a conflict of interest policy for example.

Yes

- Vulnerable Groups policies

Children - Formal applications for membership to the Order from those under 18 years old are automatically rejected and deleted. Visitors can be of any age as no forum account is required, however guests (forum account holders who are not temple members) must be of at least 13 years old. Where the accounts of under 13s are identified, they are blocked.

Account holders between the ages of 13-18 are encouraged to contact one of the two Youth Officers, both of whom have had criminal background checks. There is also a specific Youth FAQ for those under the age of 18, and for their parents/guardians, outlining the rules of the forum for minors and for information on internet safety. Minors are then given access to the Youth Forum which is inaccessible to Adult Members (other than the Youth Officers and Councillors (Temple leadership)). Youth Officers will allow minors membership of the Order (until they are 18) without providing the information required by the full application if the potential Youth member provides contact details for a parent or guardian. The Youth Officers contact the parent or guardian of any minor that is 13 years old (where possible) providing information on the forum, its rules, and where the parent/guardian can go to for information. Youth Officers may also contact the parent or guardian of

any other minor for the same reason. These emails seek to open up a line of contact with the parents/guardians, while also allowing Youth Officers to spot check if minors are providing legitimate contact details for them.

Vulnerable Adults – As with any publically accessible community, and particularly one that has a religious element, we do have members who struggle with mental illness, mental or physical disability or other psychological concerns. They are treated with the same level of respect, compassion and empathy as any other member. Where appropriate we advise them to seek professional medical help, if this has not already happened, and we always advocate for people to rely on their medical professional's judgement with regard to treatment. As is well documented in research, some of the practices we promote (meditation, the development of emotional intelligence, mindfulness and self awareness) can have a positive impact on many conditions, and we encourage these as complimentary to whatever treatment a member may be receiving.

In addition, there is protocol for the confidential escalation of any concerns for the wellbeing of members to senior members of the Temple who have the authority to alert emergency services.

- Possible detriments or harms In accordance with the Jedi Doctrine we do not promote anything that is damaging to the environment, dangerous or damaging to physical or mental health, anything that encourages or promotes violence and hatred towards others or anything that unlawfully restricts a person's freedom

- Monitoring misinterpretation, misrepresentation or perversion of the Doctrine All our forums and teachings are moderated by dedicated senior Members of TOTJO. Abuse, intimidation, intentionally detrimental misrepresentation and ad hominem attacks are not tolerated. We believe in giving guests and members second chances but continued breaches of our Rules may lead to account suspension. A full list of the rules can be found here:
<https://www.templeofthejediorder.org/faq#Rules>

- Potential damage to physical or mental health of the members or public in general We firmly believe that our Doctrine improves the physical and mental health of our Members and the public in general, being focused on compassion, empathy and spiritual development. Members are free to leave at any time, and there are no requirements for attendance or involvement. Jediism is not a religion that anyone converts to. They may adopt any or all of the teachings that we provide but they are not compelled to in anyway and they are free to maintain all aspects of their existing belief systems.

- Data Protection We do not, and will not sell the private or public information, or contact details of our guests and members and we do not, and will not engage in external marketing or advertising.

Religious Activities

In the classification section of this application you have stated that your organisation provides religious activities. Please answer the following supplementary questions. if you have provided the specific information requested here in an earlier question you do not need to provide it again. Tell us about the tenets of faith which your organisation advances. This may be explained in your governing document.

Jediism is a religion based on the observance of the Force, the ubiquitous and metaphysical power that a Jedi (a follower of Jediism) believes to be the underlying, fundamental nature of the universe.

In addition to the doctrine contained in our governing document, Teachings of Jediism include, but are not limited to:

1. Jedi are in touch with the Force. We are open to spiritual awareness and keep our minds in tune with the beauty of the world. We are forever learning and open our minds to experiences and knowledge of ourselves and others.
2. Jedi maintain a clear mind; which can be achieved through meditation and contemplation. Our minds can become unduly troubled and concerned with the happenings of the world. We must work on overcoming our individual issues through training and diligence.
3. Jedi are aware of the future impacts of action and inaction and of the influence of the past, but live in and focus on the Now. We let ourselves flow like water through the events around us. We embrace the ever changing and fluid world, adapting and changing as it does.
4. Jedi understand that well-being consists in the physical, the mental and the spiritual. A Jedi trains each to ensure they remain capable of performing their duties to the best of their ability. All of these are interconnected and essential parts of our training in becoming more harmonious with the Force.
5. Jedi are patient. We work on training ourselves not to precipitate events around us. We know that becoming a Jedi is long and hard and requires rigorous dedication and commitment. Jedi train to act with a conscientious state of calmness.
6. Jedi serve in many ways. Each action performed, no matter the scale, influences the world. With this in mind Jedi perform each action with peace, caring, love, compassion and humility. So it is that each Jedi improves the world with each deed they perform.
7. Jedi believe that love and compassion are central to their lives. We must love and care for each other as we must love and care for ourselves; by doing this we envelop all life in the positivity of our actions and thoughts. We are providers and beacons of hope.
8. Jedi cultivate empathy. We try to view things from another's perspective making us sensitive listeners. We provide the confidence people need when talking through their difficulties and we share our learning with those who would benefit. We do this to help create a more harmonious society.
9. Jedi are guardians of peace. We believe in helping all those that are in need, in whatever form, to the best of our ability. We recognise that sometimes providing help requires courage in the face of adversity but understand that conflict is resolved through peace, understanding and harmony.
10. Jedi make a commitment to their cause and to humanity. Our ideals, philosophies, and practices define the belief of Jediism and we take action on this path for self-improvement and to help others. We are both the witnesses and protectors of the Jedi way by the practice of our convictions.

2. Tell us about any moral or ethical framework that is promoted by the religion your organisation is set up to advance.

Jediism draws on many moral and ethical frameworks including:

Humanism - the philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism, empiricism) over unthinking acceptance of dogma or superstition

Egalitarianism - doctrines maintaining that all humans are equal in fundamental worth or social status

Environmentalism - the broad philosophy, ideology and social movement regarding concerns for environmental protection and improvement of the health of the environment, particularly as the measure for this health seeks to incorporate the concerns of non-human elements.

The Golden Rule - or ethic of reciprocity, is a moral maxim or principle which may appear as either a positive or negative injunction: One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself (positive or directive form).

The Publicity Principle - In order to act in a morally acceptable way, you ought to act in such a way that you would be willing to have your actions published on the front page of the newspaper the next day.

The Principle of Human Dignity and Infinite Worth - to act so as to recognize the dignity and infinite worth of every human being.

The Wiccan Rede - Do what you will, but harm none [including oneself]

Whilst not formal frameworks, Jediism also recognises the benefits of being open to different perspectives, the potential in all for self-realisation, of carving an individual path in a supporting community and for that community to be transparent.

3. Tell us specifically how your organisation advances religion, for example whether it provides a place of worship and what services or facilities it offers and how they are directed to advancing religion. Organisations applying to register as charities may advance religion in different ways. The 'i' button guidance gives the scope of information we may need to consider.

The Temple provides a virtual place of worship online and we encourage members to view the whole world as their Temple. We specialise in making use of many forms of social media beyond our forums (skype, twitter, facebook, google hangouts, youtube) and are able to engage many people who would not have access to religious institutions otherwise, and to many people who spend large quantities of time online. We very much reflect the way groups congregate these days: online.

The Temple runs online Live Services once or twice a week, open to Guests and Members.

The Temple seeks new members through its web presence and in the conduct and lives of its existing members.

The Temple encourages members to practice the religion through the lessons and sermons given. No pressure is applied at any stage but towards the end of their Initiate Programme, when they feel ready, members can swear an oath as follows: "I profess before all my fellow Jedi that I, without reservation, choose the Jedi path with all its duties and responsibilities. I promise to uphold the Jedi teachings, and to live a life worthy of a Jedi."

The Temple Clergy and other Members conduct pastoral care, listening to the problems and concerns of other members and providing a support network for those who might otherwise find themselves alone.

The Temple Clergy provide spiritual leadership and religious teaching through sermons and lessons drawing on many religious traditions.

Our Organisation has members from across the whole world and many of our resources are available in many languages. By virtue of the fact this is all conducted online, Guests, Visitors and Member's can retain complete privacy (and anonymity) should they wish to.

a) Belief in a supreme being or entity

Jedi believe in a spiritual principle that we choose to call The Force. In Object #1 we state that “Jedi believe in The Force, and in the inherent worth of all life within it. This is stated on the front page of our website (<https://www.templeofthejediorder.org/>).

The Force is (as intrinsic) to Jediism, as the Holy Spirit is to Christianity, as Brahman is to Hinduism, as the Tao is to Taoism, as the void is to Buddhism, and it shares similar facets to these spiritual principles. In this sense “The Force” is not a new spiritual principle – it is the ubiquitous and metaphysical power of the Universe – which humans have worshipped since before recorded history. What Jediism provides is a new way to worship, appreciate and integrate this spiritual principle into peoples’ lives. We call this spiritual principle by a different name to others before us, but as per a *perennial* analysis of world religion there is only one underlying, ubiquitous, uniting spiritual principle. We call it The Force.

If the nature of the Force appears to be an inculcation of a spiritual way of life, that is merely down to our poor communication of what it is and what it does. As many others have said, within the context of many other faiths, The Force is ineffable – words will never do it justice. It is to this point that Cabur Senaar makes his sermon, that you quoted in your application response. In that sermon he paraphrases the first line of the first chapter of the Tao Te Ching (“The tao that can be spoken is not the Eternal Tao”) and communicates a similar message to that of St. Paul’s 2nd Letter to the Corinthians 3:6 (. . . a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life).

Having said all of that, there are words we can use to describe aspects of The Force, these include, but are not limited to: omnipotent, omnipresent (therefore immanent), limitless, eternal, transcendent, creative and cyclic.

Whilst such descriptions can impart certain ideas of what The Force is, Jediism (in agreement with many other faiths) proposes that mere understanding and academic knowledge are not sufficient, as compared with a genuine, visceral human experience of this spiritual principle. We recommend and teach two complementary paths that allow this experience to blossom within individual consciousness. One is through collective (group) worship during Live Services. The second is through meditation (or contemplation) conducted on an individual basis or in a group setting.

Our practice of worship and meditation discipline are designed to shift a person’s consciousness away from the so-called ‘Ego’. As individual emphasis on the personal ego diminishes, space (or bandwidth) emerges for us to allow “that still small voice of calm” with which The Force speaks, to guide and animate us. Jediism provides a distinct framework for this individual connection to the divine to be recognised. Jediism is not an ‘anything goes’ theology – the distinct framework involving study, worship and contemplation is what allows the individual spirituality to flourish.

Whilst each individual person will develop their own unique appreciation of their connection with The Force (everyone has different needs, strengths, weaknesses and hang-ups) the actual connection is the same for everyone.

We can use different metaphors to describe this connection: we are all children of The Force, The Force sustains us all, it gives us the strength to take the sometimes difficult but morally right decisions, it is the source of true empathy and it is the comradeship each individual shares that is the source of selflessness and inspiration for mortification and sacrifice. It is the Ground of All Being, the Source of Beauty, and it is the player of all the parts. To paraphrase Ibn al'Arabi, the Sufi poet, "The Force sleeps in the rock, dreams in the plant, stirs in the animal . . . and awakens in Man".

We absolutely agree that there is some scope for followers to simply view Jediism as a philosophy or way of life. Many people (especially the younger generations) are aghast at the atrocities and violence committed in the name of religion. Some Jedi prefer to avoid the word 'religion' to describe their theological beliefs, ethical framework and way of life. We do not insist that members use the word 'religion' – even if that is what Jediism actually is. The benefits that accrue to followers of Jediism are not compromised by which word they use to classify it.

Many other religions (that are officially recognised as such) have come to the same conclusion. Here are just two examples:

- i) According to the Supreme Court in India, Hinduism is described as follows: "Unlike other religions in the World, the Hindu religion does not claim any one Prophet, it does not worship any one God, it does not believe in any one philosophic concept, it does not follow any one act of religious rites or performances; in fact, it does not satisfy the traditional features of a religion or creed. It is a way of life and nothing more"
[*Klostermaier, Klaus K. \(1994\), A Survey of Hinduism: Second Edition, SUNY Press*](#)

- ii) Reform Judaism: Its inherent pluralism and great importance placed on individual autonomy impede any simplistic definition of Reform Judaism; its various strands regard Judaism throughout the ages as derived from a process of constant evolution. They warrant and obligate further modification, and reject any fixed, permanent set of beliefs, laws or practices. The movement ceased stressing principles and core beliefs, focusing more on the personal spiritual experience. This shift was not accompanied by a distinct new doctrine or by the abandonment of the former, but rather with ambiguity. The leadership allowed and encouraged a wide variety of positions, from selective adoption of [*halakhic*](#) observance to elements approaching [*religious humanism*](#). The declining importance of the theoretical foundation in favour of pluralism and equivocalness, did draw large crowds of newcomers. It also diversified Reform to a degree which made it hard to formulate a clear definition of it. Kaplan, *Challenges and Reflections*, pp. 7, 315; [*Jonathan Romain, Tradition and Change: A History of Reform Judaism in Britain, 1840–1995, Vallentine Mitchell, 1995. pp. 39-45.*](#)

The purpose of a religion is to provide a better life and / or afterlife to its followers through union to a deeper, divine reality, from which we would otherwise seem detached. We firmly believe that it is through the observance and appreciation of The Force that adherents can enjoy a better life and be less fearful of what the afterlife may have in store. We are all intimately connected to the Universe – we do not come into it, but are born from it – and the experience of this connection to the Universe (and all life in it) is the source of genuine contentment, and alleviation of suffering. This applies to our physical bodies, our minds and to our spirit.

b) Relationship with the supreme being or entity expressed by worship, reverence, veneration or in some comparable manner.

We agree that the sermons alone do not constitute evidence of the necessary qualities of worship. What we failed to make clear in our application is that the sermons form only a part of our worship in Live Services. To address this, please find a selection of transcripts from recent Live Services, to be found in Appendix A. As you will see these do show evidence of genuine, sincere, regular, worship, veneration and spiritual relationship. The fact that this worship occurs via the internet does not diminish the collective spirit of the service, the sincerity of the veneration which occurs, or the community spirit it fortifies.

Live Services are conducted in the 'chat' section of our website and we have found there are many benefits to online services: accessibility for anyone (with an internet connection) including the physically disabled and those suffering from certain psychological traits that do not lend themselves to typical public group worship (shyness, agoraphobia). More obviously, without the restraints of physical proximity, our community can congregate in union, irrespective of their location.

As we have stated above, we also believe that meditation is another truly effective way to observe and appreciate our intimate connection with The Force. Through a diligent meditation practice we encourage the followers of Jediism to recognise their connection to the Divine in all aspects of their lives, society and environment. From this perspective, every interaction is an opportunity to recognise the hierophany (manifestation of the sacred) that is the defining element of every experience and sensation, filled with wonder, awe and appreciation.

Both Meditation and Live Services are mechanisms that allow us to observe and appreciate The Force in our lives and in the World on an on-going, and continuous basis.

We would hope that this evidence compares favourably with a typical British Quaker meeting which are on the whole completely silent, and include no obvious dogma, creed or ritual.

c. Cogency, cohesion, seriousness and importance in the form of the belief system

Clearly as representatives of Temple of The Jedi Order we cannot, would not, and do not interfere with the beliefs and practices of other groups who define themselves as Jedi. In the same way Protestants do not recognise Catholics as truly Christian, Roman Catholics do not recognise Orthodox Catholics as truly Christian, many Muslims do not recognise the Sufis as truly Islamic and so on . . .

What we can do is represent the cogency, cohesion, seriousness and importance of the belief system we advance at TOTJO. The quote you draw from the FAQ page addresses this point openly and honestly. Whilst all religions evolve over time, Jediism at TOTJO is well grounded and will not radically change in response to individuals who do not agree with our beliefs and practices. If an individual does not feel like our beliefs and customs suit them, they are free to look elsewhere across the spectrum of groups that classify themselves as Jedi.

We are open to different perspectives, self-realisation and individual paths but these paths all need to be heading in broadly the same direction as signposted by our belief system. An example of this would be Quietism: there are people who label themselves as Jedi, promoting an exclusively Quietist doctrine. The Jediism of TOTJO is not compatible with an exclusively Quietist doctrine – we promote action when appropriate and judicious use of our powers of intervention (Maxim #20).

In the same way, followers may adopt Jediism alongside any other religion, as long as this does not cause doctrinal conflict. Many Christian Jedi equate The Force to the Holy Spirit and this causes no theological dissonance. A fundamentalist Christian who accepts the literal truth of the Bible would not be welcome to constantly attack Jediism for heretical beliefs. To use a well-known metaphor, the descriptions possible of Jediism are a little like the Indian story of blind men describing an elephant. Here is the Jain version:

“Six blind men were asked to determine what an elephant looked like by feeling different parts of the elephant's body. The blind man who feels a leg says the elephant is like a pillar; the one who feels the tail says the elephant is like a rope; the one who feels the trunk says the elephant is like a tree branch; the one who feels the ear says the elephant is like a hand fan; the one who feels the belly says the elephant is like a wall; and the one who feels the tusk says the elephant is like a solid pipe.

A king explains to them:

All of you are right. The reason every one of you is telling it differently is because each one of you touched the different part of the elephant. So, actually the elephant has all the features you mentioned.”

Many interpretations of Jediism are possible and it is only in aggregate that it is possible to draw up a more complete picture. The point is that none of these range of descriptions are wrong – they are merely incomplete. Indeed – it is only through acceptance of different perspectives, coupled with knowledge, wisdom and experience, that a complete picture can be drawn.

However, in order to address your criticisms regarding Jediism’s coherence and distinction (we assume you mean distinction in the sense of clarity, rather than originality – original beliefs are extremely rare) we will lay out for you the framework of the religion. Whilst the authors of this framework are followers of Jediism, hopefully we can define the framework in a way that makes objective understanding possible.

- a) As Jedi we worship and venerate The Force.
- b) The Force is ineffable but it is the ubiquitous and metaphysical power that is the underlying, fundamental nature of the Universe, The Ground of All Being and Manifestation.
- c) It is omnipotent, omnipresent (therefore immanent), limitless, eternal, transcendent, creative and cyclic.
- d) As human beings we are all embedded and imbued with this power but in modern society we do not typically even notice it. We ignore it – much like a fish is ignorant of the water in which it lives.
- e) Union with the Force is achieved through worship and contemplation (meditation): the direction of conscious attention away from the self, and towards The Force.
- f) The effect of this Union is profound. Our energies cease to be limited to our meagre individual will, The Force is released to act through us. This energy does not manifest in the form of ‘supernatural’ power but in a resolute and perpetual drive to empathy and love for all sentient beings, and in a drive to bring them into that same Union that we experience.
- g) The Maxims and Teachings in the TOTJO doctrine (<https://www.templeofthejediorder.org/doctrine-of-the-order>) are the behaviours and actions that are manifestations, and evidence of this Union. These behaviours and actions include, but are not limited to: empathy, generosity, patience, peace, compassion, loyalty, commitment, courage, humility, fearlessness, honesty, discipline, integrity and harmony.

- h) The ethical and moral frameworks outlined in our application are the simplest ways to summarise the net effect of this Union with The Force.
- i) The Force does not compete, dwell on its goodness, or bathe in the light that it brings - and neither do the Jedi. We let go and move on.

Union with The Force will not look identical for all individuals. Particularly in the early stages of this awakening, it will be in the form of a unique transformation for each individual. Jediism is not a cult and we not engage in theological brainwashing to manipulate people into a single, uniform, tightly constrained ideology.

Rather, as the transformation continues, the steps are akin to Jungian individuation whereby individual characteristics, understandings and experiences are synchronised into a cogent, cohesive and sincere whole. The engine in a car contains pistons, spark plugs, camshafts, cylinders and many different individual parts. When arranged correctly they form what can be adequately described as one, fully integrated, engine. Jediism is like this.

In conclusion, objective identification and analysis of Jediism is quite possible as this selection of 'non-Jedi' analysis proves:

http://www.academia.edu/25986951/From_Star_Wars_to_Jediism_The_Emergence_of_Fiction-based_Religion

http://altreligion.about.com/od/alternativereligionsaz/a/jedi_religion.htm

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-29753530>

<http://factmyth.com/factoids/jediism-is-an-actual-religion/>

<http://oddculture.com/jediism-an-alternative-religion/>

d) Capable of providing moral and ethical value or edification to the public

Over the 10 years that TOTJO has been running we have attracted over 25,000 registered guests and members. The majority of guests do not become members of TOTJO and remain 'members of the public' whilst benefiting from inclusion in our temple. Members of the public are free to become visitors, guests, or members at any time and benefit from the considerable (and free) resources, teaching, worship opportunities, and pastoral care available. All of these are also available to Visitors. Much as hungry person needs to get to a foodbank in order to receive the food, a person in need of spiritual sustenance need only come to our website.

Whilst not being evangelical in nature we do reach out to the general public, primarily through our Public Relations team to maintain a recognisable public presence, and to answer inquiries from the Press. Furthermore – all our members to a greater or lesser degree will attract interest in Jediism through their actions, and interactions with all people they come into contact with.

As we have previously presented, the moral and ethical values that emerge through Union with The Force can be summarised through frameworks that have been constructed in other religions and through different philosophies. This process is synonymous with, and a synthesis of, The Perennial Philosophy (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perennial_philosophy for a brief overview).

As Aldous Huxley states in his seminal "The Perennial Philosophy": *"it is the [metaphysic](#) that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the [psychology](#) that*

finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical to, divine Reality; the [ethic](#) that places man's final end in the knowledge of the [immanent](#) and [transcendent Ground of all being](#); the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the perennial philosophy may be found among the traditional lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions"

The reason why Jediism is capable of providing moral and ethical values and edification to the public is not only due to the outreach of our members, the work of our PR team and the near universal availability of our teaching on the Internet. It is due to the fact that whole generations largely turned-off by the mega-religions of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism with their chequered histories, wars, dogma, out-moded forms of worship and unbridled fundamentalism, are attracted by our nomenclature, our lack of theological baggage, lack of dogma and reasonableness.

Jediism provides a package that is attractive to people, allowing them to engage in beneficial religious practice, join a caring community and ultimately to find themselves in Union with the Divine Reality, to which the Perennial Philosophy, and all genuine Religions speak. Without the route that Jediism opens, this guided path to Union with the Divine would be closed to many people.

All moral and ethical frameworks are open to interpretation – especially when they are merely studied or read. The whole purpose of having Clergy, and a unified community is to steer all individual interpretations of our moral and ethical frameworks into a very similar, if not completely uniform direction. One need only look into the Islamic concept of *Jihad* to see how confused the moral and ethical frameworks of major, recognised, religions are. We feel it is unnecessary to develop a list of other moral and ethical confusions amongst other religions – as they are plain to see – even to the layman.

Public Benefit

Beyond these tangible Public Benefits, members (and others influenced by Jedi teaching) do not remain cloistered within the Temple Walls. At all stages we are encouraged and indeed called (by The Force) to go out in the World and do what we can for good. At this stage there are no Jedi foodbanks, schools, hospices, homeless shelters or official charities. Part of our original charity application is to instigate this process - yet if our application ultimately fails it will not affect the way that Jedi go out into the World, to help the needy. Whilst many individuals already engaged in the volunteer sector become Jedi, there are a large number of Jedi who build service, volunteering and charity work for the Public Benefit into their lives.

The charity work which many Jedi undertake occurs as direct result of the teaching of the TOTJO. Jedi are not compelled to volunteer by peer pressure, coercion or in showy acts of altruism. Rather, the call to such service emerges directly from The Force. Jedi become teachers, nurses, charity workers, search and rescue professionals, military, councillors and engage in a whole range of charitable acts which are directed towards the public in general and are not directed to members.

It would be antithetical to our *modus operandi* to record, quantify and count these acts of charity – as previously stated – they are not undertaken because they are perceived as virtuous by society.

Rather, these actions for the Public Benefit emerge because they must, as a natural out-growth of Union with The Force.