

Can a Jedi engage in or be party to Curse Work?

In honor of the witchy holiday that is about to come up, I wanted to write on a “Should a Jedi” question that has been weighing on my mind as I watch all these Halloween Season shows, movies and documentaries- Should a Jedi engage in or be party to Curse Work?

First, let’s begin with: It doesn’t matter if you believe in curse work, there are Jedi who do believe. Furthermore, it’s good to know what the Jedi Philosophy has to say on the matter for those times that a person may desperately reach out to curse work as a last resort to resolve an issue. Secondly, I’d like to have to dispel a few myths about Curse Work.

- 1) The first myth is that it’s confined to Pagan Traditions. In the Old Testament, you actually find a couple Prophets who curse others. Noah cursed his grandson, and that curse has sadly been misinterpreted (even misplaced as Noah having cursed his son, rather than grandson) so many times that it is used to discriminate against Black People. Eventually, you find that Prophets will only deliver the oracle of a curse from God, rather than pronouncing one of their own. In the New Testament, you see that pronouncing personal curses upon others is not in line with Christ’s teachings- only God can pronounce curses. However, in Islam, you find that there is a precedent for Muslims to call upon God to pronounce a curse upon liars (Ayah al-Imran 3:61). And in fact, if you call for God to see his wrath upon the enemies of Israel, you could say that you are still engaging in a form of Curse Work, but you’re handing over the reigns to God to ultimately decide. This means that at least 2 of the major 3 religions theoretically allow for curse work. I’m sure you’ll find Christian denominations which also allow for it, but the overarching message is that you need to forgive and let God handle it.
- 2) The second myth is that curse work is always vengeance oriented. Did you know that the Hawaiian Chiefs sometimes had a sorcerer who could pray people to death. They were called Kahuna ‘Anā’anā. Under the monarchy, they were banned. But before that, they were highly regulated. If they were caught killing (or at least trying to) someone they weren’t suppose to, they were put to death themselves. This is it’s own curse- a curse of Death. And it’s not just here we see this, in the Old Testament, we see a case where a monarch tried to get a prophet (Balak) to curse Israel (it didn’t work out, instead God had him bless Israel). Since we have an example of two very distant cultures with state-sanctioned curse work going on, we can assume that there was more of this going on in the ancient world. And today, someone might engage in curse work on behalf of a paying client or out of a sense of justice (perhaps targeting a convicted child murderer you learned about in the news).

Now that we have these things established, there can be a more in-depth discussion had on this subject. Buckle in, because my exploration got rather lengthy, and is going to take the whole week to publish. It may be more stream-of-consciousness than streamlined thoughts, too, so I apologize ahead of time, but it will all come together. You'll have to read to the end before the whole puzzle is pieced together.

As a disclaimer- this is my *personal* take on the subject after careful consideration. Others are welcome to disagree, and if they do, I hope they will put just as much effort into the thought process as I have.

The Burden of Proof

- “There is no Ignorance, there is Knowledge; Ignorance, yet Knowledge” (The Jedi Code)
- “There is no Emotion, there is Peace; Emotion, yet Peace” (The Jedi Code)
- “Objectivity - A Jedi trains themselves to gain as much relevant information as possible before drawing their conclusions. Once intelligence has been collected, they approach the problem with as little cultural and emotional bias as possible so that they are able to develop a decision on their next action.” (The Jedi Compass)
- “Morality: To Know the Danger of Belief - A Jedi knows how contradicting beliefs of what is right and wrong can lead to devastating crimes and conflicts. A Jedi takes a step away from the subjectivity of opinion in favour of the peace of objectivity. A Jedi does not force their values upon others.” (Temple of the Jedi Order Doctrine)
- “A Jedi approaches all situations with objectivity, recognizing that the truth can only be revealed when they have all the information available.” (Principles of Jediism, 2019 TotJO Project)

All of these speak to the same basic value of being objective. Not in the sense of whether or not curse work is real, but rather answering the first question: Why perform the curse in the first place? As I outlined above, curse work does not have to come from a place of vengeance, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't explore the motivations of performing the curse. Even if a Jedi were to restrict themselves to doing curse work only on behalf of others, they would need to be aware of the emotional place that the person asking them to perform curse work is coming from. As guardians of peace, we cannot act on ours or someone else's need for vengeance.

But these lines speak to other forms of objectivity as well. Particularly in the case of whether or not we are Judge, Jury and/or Executioner. Information can get very muddled. Our court systems are known for getting the wrong guys too. So we have to ask ourselves, what evidence do we have to say so-and-so is guilty of the wrong they are accused?

Evidence isn't something we simply obtain from eye-witness accounts, but there should be some kind of physical record we can look at and be certain of a person's guilt. By looking at historic Salem alone, we can see how witnesses can create mass hysteria. Unfortunately, this isn't confined to the 1600s, even today we have stories such as the Central Park 5 where the eye witness later apologized for her part in their convictions. We also have stories where the full evidence would later exonerate the defendants- The West Memphis 3, Randy Steidl, and James Hill come to mind.

But what qualifies as evidence? You could meditate and seek the answer using a sixth sense, but relying on this method is dangerous. Relying on this method goes against a Jedi Behavior known as "Conquer Overconfidence" (you can find this in the Wookieepedia Jedi Code article under the Legends Tab). The Overconfidence you are exerting isn't in the Force, but rather your ability to accurately navigate the Force. No matter how skilled you believe you are, you run the risk of that one time letting your bias cloud your judgement.

In knowing this, the rule set has to shift to hard evidence. While video is great, it's of note that different angles can produce different information. So it's important to go over it with a fine-toothed comb to ensure there isn't something that could be missing.

I could keep going on. At the end of the day, the only iron-clad evidence is that which you personally witness live. So the way around this, is to rely on an outside Judge and Executioner, which makes the Jedi the Investigator. So starting out, I've reached my first conclusion:

Jedi cannot be the executioner of curse work. *But is it right for them to move forward and ask a supernatural force to judge and execute punishment if the being finds them guilty of the charge?* I'll table this for now, and return to it later.

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Should a Jedi engage in or be party to Curse Work? (Legal Matters, Tolerance & Defense)

- Defense - A Jedi understands that defense is not purely physical, but that there are many ways to defend a person or property. As such, it is important to understand that Jedi are not vigilantes. If, however, they are in a position where they are called to defend themselves or someone else against loss of life, limb or senses, they are allowed to apply the appropriate amount of force necessary for defense." (The Jedi Compass)
- "Tolerance - You do not need to agree with someone's religion, their nationality, their career choice, their dress or anything else for that matter. Tolerance is not about agreement, it is about showing respect for the freedom of a persons choices and to respect their choices, until it reaches a point in which a reasonable person would consider the individual's actions as a/an

(emotionally, spiritually, financially, and/or physically) abusive threat to you or another person.” (The Jedi Compass)

- “Justice: To always seek the path of ‘right’- A Jedi is unencumbered by bias or personal interest. Justice is a double-edged sword, one that protects the weak, yet also passes judgements according to a set of values. A Jedi tolerates that which is not Jedi and does not pass judgement on that which causes no harm for it is just.” (Temple of the Jedi Order Doctrine)
- “A Jedi does not let personal interest or bias determine justice. They know that Justice is a double-edged sword, one which protects a party, yet passes judgment upon another according to a set of values. They tolerate what is not Jedi, and only pass judgment against that which inflicts harm upon another being.” (Principles of Jediism, 2019 Temple of the Jedi Order Project)
- “A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack” (The Skywalker Code)
- “Respect the Law - A Jedi knows enough of the law to operate within it. Jedi should respect, and do their best to live by, the laws of the land they are living in. However, these are man's law, and like man, subject to flaws. A Jedi must act for the best interest of mankind as he/she sees the situation.” (The Jedi Compass)
- “Honor the Law - One of the most important roles of the Jedi was to protect the peace and justice of the Republic, and so no Jedi was above the law. Jedi were expected to follow the law the same as they expected others to. Jedi were permitted to break laws, but only when it was required, and only if they were willing to suffer the consequences” (Jedi Behaviors)

What does it take to enact a curse? Each of the above citations build a foundation for a Jedi’s Rules of Engagement [RoE] (tolerance) and Escalation of Force [EoF] (Law & Defense).

In the Military, A RoE is a set of guidelines for when you are allowed to engage in Escalation of Force against the Enemy. Things like, “Return fire with aimed fire” when you’re getting shot at is a combination of RoE (when you’re getting fired at) and EoF (return fire with aimed fire). But you may be given more complex RoE’s, like having a set of things you have to protect. This may be a building, or classified equipment. That is, you have the right to defend it up to lethal force if the situation calls for it. At that point, you have to use your best judgement for your EoF model. Basically, these are rules for when you’re called to be combative.

The reason I bring it up, is because Curse Work is a form of Metaphysical Combat. And just like Physical Combat situations, there should be an established RoE and EoF. For the Jedi, the RoE is outlined in our sandlines of Tolerance and Defense. Each one draws a line in the sand when real harm is present. The Jedi Compass distinguishes the discussion of when to get combative, at the point that there is a loss of life, limb or eyesight. Tolerance, although making the statement that Jedi draw a line at “abusive threat” has to take into account that there are a multitude of

ways to resolve problems before it reaches the point that physical altercation is necessary to protect a person. This is further covered by understanding a person, even a victim, has the right to decide their own fate.

That may seem very hard for some people to read. But if you talk to a seasoned cop about Domestic Violence, you'll learn that the Cycle of Violence is a very difficult pattern to break out of and it requires the victim to step out on their own and make movement forward- otherwise they'll fall right back into it. Therefore, on average, the best way to help them out of the situation is through diplomatic means. However, Domestic Violence that has gone Physical, certainly fits into the category of "loss of life, limb or eyesight".

But does Curse Work that doesn't involve Death Curses fit into the model of a Tolerance line in the sand? Maybe a curse that aims to teach the person a lesson? Say, something that will cause the target to go to jail or to think twice about cheating on someone?

If the evidence is there to support jail time, then this evidence should be turned over to the proper authorities (Respect/Honor the Law). If the person is cheating, honestly it would be better to empower the person asking for retribution to approach the cheater and break up with them.

Because I've defined the Jedi as the Investigator, and not the Executioner, Jury or Judge, it means that once the curse is out of the Jedi's hands- there's no telling what form a potential curse may take. The aforementioned cheater may contract an STD, and not care at all who they end up with. The lesson, whether executed by the Jedi themselves or the being they hand over the case to, is not guaranteed and may result in unnecessary collateral damage (Overcome/Conquer Recklessness).

In considering these things, it means that curse work may only be warranted when there is a credible threat of loss of life, limb or eyesight. But in holding true to the discussion of the Law (Honor/Respect the Law), this has to be an imminent threat. Not a threat that could occur in an hour from now- one that is taking place at this moment. We can see this clearly laid out in the code's line "Jedi use the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack".

Although the films do have extenuating circumstances where they will attack things before they are actively used (such as taking out the Death Star, or the fight with Darth Maul), we have to recognize that there are a few very important points to address.

The Death Star was a Military Target. The people in the Death Star may have lost their lives, but they were armed with the most dangerous weapon in the galaxy. And they had already demonstrated they would use it on innocent civilians. No other options but to get rid of the

Death Star existed. Even disabling the laser on it would have only bought them borrowed time. In the case of Darth Maul, Maul drew his weapon first and presented a threat to Padme's forces. The moment he drew his weapon, it wasn't a matter of attack, but a matter of defense. As long as someone is alive, and not at this very moment being abused, they have options. They are not in "Imminent" danger, according to the law.

Now one might ask "Why bring up worldly law, when this deals with the metaphysical and can't be proven in a court of law?". Of the two citations at the beginning of this section, the most lenient is probably that of the Jedi Compass which points out that the laws of the land are man-made and subject to flaws. Although true, I feel that Honoring or Respecting a Law deals less with the letter, and more with the spirit of it.

The Spirit of American Law is built upon the concept that "You Are Innocent Until Proven Guilty". Since you cannot know for certain the mind of a person until they speak it or act upon their thoughts, we have to be patient with our actions. This also means that we have concrete evidence of the action taken in the moment.

Curse Work falls short in this arena. Unless you can enact a curse to work within seconds of beginning it, then it means that its effects will come long after the attack has been committed (whether it's the Jedi doing it or a third party they've called in). By this point, law enforcement may already be involved, or the victim has made their decision to leave or stay. Which brings me to another point of consideration- that the added stress a curse has on the assailant may get taken out further on their victim, and escalate to proportions the curse was trying to prevent. Again, entering into Recklessness.

If we Honor/Respect the Law in terms of the Law of the Land, then our integrity should hold us accountable to the same principles of the Law of the Land in our Metaphysical usage.

So my second conclusion is: *Curse Work isn't practical when analyzing it against the Ethic of Defense. And it is against the Spirit of the Law, which is covered under Respect the Law.*

These aren't the only things I considered in my personal exploration. I had one more angle I considered.

Respecting All Life

- "We oppose the use of torture and cruel or unusual punishment" (Temple of the Jedi Order Doctrine)

- “Jedi respect all life, in any form.” (Skywalker Code)
- “Jedi Believe...In the Force and in the inherent worth of all life within it.” (Temple of the Jedi Order Doctrine)

Again, we see the use of something which deals more with the concept of physical realm responses in the first citation: Cruel and Unusual Punishment. This terminology was intended to target any kind of punishment that causes suffering, pain and/or humiliation. Technically, even prisons are *suppose* to maintain a detained person’s dignity. Though, that isn’t always the case. It’s sad that in hearing some stories from people who have been in the system, I can tell you that the while we were there, the Theater Internment Facility my husband worked at and the Detainee Facility I worked at in the Middle East treated terrorists far better than how American prisons treat our citizens. Many of the stories I’ve heard illustrate that the Prison Facilities are in violation of the Cruel & Unusual Punishment clause.

Respecting Life in any Form includes Humans, and as such, we should measure our actions as being humane or inhumane. On the world scale, we have the Geneva Conventions and Hague Laws which dictate what is and isn’t acceptable during war. These are intended to increase compassion in a combat zone and minimize collateral damage.

There are different kinds of curses- those which are on-going with no intended end, those which are on-going until certain conditions are met, and curses intended to end in death. The kind which are on-going with no intended end are cruel. A person might actually learn their lesson later, but still continue to suffer from the curse. Even if the person placing the curse upon another decides to break it later, the intent when working the curse to make it permanent was still present. Death Curses rob a person of the possibility for redemption- which may take a life time to achieve. It is one thing to defend against an attack and the assailant’s death be the end result. The threat is in real time, but to do so when there is only a only the possibility (no matter how probable it is) of a threat, is vigilantism. And as it states in the Jedi Compass under Defense “Jedi are not vigilantes”.

But what about a curse with built in rules for its termination? Again, I return to “Jedi are not vigilantes”. Therefore, the answer is “No, a Jedi cannot perform any kind of curse work, because it is a form of vigilante justice”. The defining difference is oversight. That is, law enforcement and the judicial branch of our governments are meant to have oversight by various agencies and the public- even if it’s not perfect, because man is imperfect, it’s something. While the oversight of Kahuna ‘Anā’anā in Old Hawaii may have been the chief of a town, today there is no sanctioned system of the people to enforce rules on such matters.

Incidentally, if a Jedi Order ever rose to the status that they could issue punishments for such things you would run into the problem of it becoming a cult, or facing the same issues we see happening in Jesus' story- where the Jewish people were able to decide matters of justice because the Romans allowed it. Today, there is a very good reason that "Separation of Church and State" exist. Since Metaphysics alone cannot be proven in a court of law, and even if you could- evidence of who did what would be elusive because there is no science to show a "Metaphysical Fingerprint/DNA Match". Because it has no oversight, and there can be no legitimate human authority appointed for oversight, it falls into Vigilantism.

Now, one could argue that the overseeing authority is a divine force, or collective of divine forces. However, I'll point out that if you look at the Jedi Philosophy in it's entirety, we are more strict with our ethics than many divine beings. Thus, a divine source isn't really the right one to go to in order to hold us accountable to the Jedi Philosophy and Code. That's something we have to do on our own, and hope that our peers will assist us with.

The Final Question Left Unaddressed & Summary Conclusion

Circling back, there is one final question that should be addressed: *Is it right for a Jedi to move forward and ask a supernatural force to judge and execute punishment if the being finds them guilty of the charge?*

I've mentioned that a divine being can make any decision he/she/it/they want. This may go in the favor of the curse worker, or it may not. We have no way of knowing how an answer to a request will manifest. It could go in a way that leads to redemption or it could just tear the person apart.

To be fair, we do this same thing when we leave things to the courts to decide upon a person's guilt or innocence, and the subsequent actions. But divine beings haven't given us a legal book that outlines what happens when a someone is found guilty of a myriad of different crimes. Western Courts have, you get X amount of time, you have X dollar fine, you may get probation, or community service, we even know things that will result in Capital Punishment. We have a set of expectations. The Divine doesn't give us that- the range of punishment that divine being can inflict is an unknown factor.

But if we strip this away, we are presented with challenge of motivation. If you're asking for a curse, it's because you've made a judgement that the person isn't worthy of redemption. In contrast, by asking for them to receive the help they need to get their life on track, you are giving into hope that they are worthy of respect as human beings. Now, if the divine source you are

asking decides that the only way to do that is to curse the person- that's not your problem. Your intention wasn't to harm, but to allow compassion to lead the way.

Conclusion Summary

No, a Jedi cannot engage in Curse Work. They can't ask for it, and they cannot perform it themselves. If you have all the information to prove that a curse is warranted, then there is enough information to put them behind bars. And if it's not an offense that can be charged, you're saying that you are the one who gets to decide what is right and wrong- meaning that you haven't conquered your sense of self-importance (mentioned under the Jedi Behaviors tenet "Conquer Arrogance").

Furthermore, consider this- by engaging in curse work, you are not encouraging the person requesting the curse work (yourself or someone else) to let go of their attachments (a common teaching amongst the fictional Jedi and real life Jedi). Confrontation is one way to address this, but that should be done in court and not through the cowardice of using metaphysical answers. Letting go through the compassion of forgiveness or hope for redemption is another way. But as the saying goes:

Hate leads to suffering.

That is, if you allow your hate to fester, you and/or the person you hate will both suffer the consequences, and this leads to The Dark Side.

As Guardians of Peace, who believe that the way to forge peace can be found within our Philosophy, we alone have to maintain our integrity to the Jedi Path...even when no one else is looking. And let me ask you- how can you forge peace, if your will wants nothing more than to see the suffering of others...even if it is on the off-chance they might turn a new leaf?