Questions For The Pit

Announcement

Kay

Hey everybody, Kay here on behalf of Helltraef. Unfortunately, we find ourselves on the brink of a second dark age. Constant wars on science, the polarisation of thought, and the use of psychological tactics by media, corporations, and politicians alike, worsened of course by the appearance of thinking-as-a-service type tools such as large language AI models, risk degrading quality of thought and thus stopping people from effectively exercising their autonomy.

Though this problem is pervasive, we as Satanists do not believe in giving up, but rather applying our efforts to challenge the problems we see in the world. To that end, I'm extremely excited to announce the launch of our new campaign, Lucifer's Light.

In this campaign, we will be educating people on the topics of logic and fallacies, psychological biases, and media and science literacy. To do this, we'll be increasing our social media presence, posting messages that inform about specific fallacies, biases, and scientific facts, as well as producing dedicated episodes of the podcast towards these topics.

More, a member of Helltraef who is an actively researching scientist will be partnering with other Satanic organisations to give presentations on logic and science literacy. We hope that you enjoy this campaign and that you come out of it better equipped to navigate the current landscape of misinformation, confusion, and information oversaturation. Remember, hail yourselves and hail Satan.

(Intro Theme)

Pike
Welcome to Devil's Discourse, the podcast where your friendly neighbourhood Satanists chat idly about everyday life. In fact, we've been chatting idly for a year now, and to celebrate the occasion, we'll be entertaining ourselves by answering questions posed to us by other Satanists, the general public, or crazy people. Sometimes it's hard to tell the three groups apart.

The idea was that the questions would be made up, but quite a few real ones sneaked in once we consulted our inbox and the comments we get online. See if you can tell fact from fiction. Hell is a hello, hail Satan and hail you. And hail our satanic council today, which was to be 3 of us, but one of us feeling unwell, so it's just the gruesome twosome uh made up of Pike, that's your guest host today. And Lithos.

Lithos
Hail Satan.

Pike
This is Devil's Discourse, and the Council will now hear missives from the temporal world. To kick us off, we have this gem from SavedNDForgiven, um, comment from Devil's Library on YouTube. It's all in caps lock. I'll read it out to make it sound like it's in caps lock.
TURN TO JESUS CHRIST TODAY… THERE IS NOT LONG LEFT… I PROMISE YOU THIS IS NOT A GAME... SATAN WILL NOT GIVE YOU A KINGDOM IN THE WORLD TO COME... HE OWNS NOTHING THERE... JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONE YOU NEED TO FOLLOW… TURN TO HIM, ASK FOR FORGIVENESS TODAY… HE LOVES YOU DEARLY

Lithos

It's a nice sentiment, but I don't think he loves- I don't think he loves me dearly. What about you?

Pike

Yeah, I mean, love declared by a third party is always a little bit suspect. If he loves me dearly, why don't he say so?

Lithos

Yes, yes. But apparently he loves us all dearly. Who are we to judge? Well, yes, we can judge.

Pike

So is any part of this worrying you?

Lithos

Not particularly. I don't see how- yeah, the lack of sort of proper punctuation and capitalization over all things is kind of worrying. I fear for the sanity of the person who posted this, or their state of mind because it's very very hard to read things in all caps, isn't it?

Pike

Yes. What is it about religious fervour that makes people type in all caps? Hmm.

Lithos

Like shouting is gonna get your message across better. It's like the English tourist syndrome, you know, if you can't speak the language, just shout at foreigners. In English, really loudly, and they'll understand.

Pike

Yeah, that's right. Yeah, I think if this was in not done on the internet, it would be in green ink.

Lithos

Yes, yes, indeed it would be. Yeah. So I've got some questions here. These are these are the kind of questions that we have been asked, and one of them is: Satan is evil, right? Why choose to be evil? Which is kind of a misinterpretation of how we view Satan, wouldn't you say?

Pike

Indeed. And it's two questions. I think they are quite separate questions. I would ask the writer, what do they mean by evil, right? Um, is it evil like Eartha Kitt, you know, I wanna be evil. I wanna drink booze because that's, that's a fun kind of evil. Uh, is it evil like people, I don't know, murdering people, which is bad kind of evil, or, you know, it's a whole different level, like [BEEPED] customer service.

We'll probably have to beep that out.

Lithos

Yes. Yeah. I'll beep out the, yeah, the actual company. I think, yeah, that this goes back to the podcast which we did with the theistic Satanist, Pastor Johnny, who actually mentioned that the types of Satanists are not theistic versus non-theistic. It's people who think Satan's the bad guy and people who think Satan's the good guy.

And you know, Satan is not the bad guy or evil in our interpretation of Satan. So, you know, we're not about evil. We're kind of about the qualities of knowledge and learning and that side of things. So Satan is not regarded as evil. That's a very Catholic, Abrahamic interpretation of Satan. And the interpretation of Satan is

very, very open because a lot of what we are told Satan is does not come from the Bible.

It comes from stuff that was written after, be it Paradise Lost, be it Dante's Inferno, and various things that have been put out. There aren't that many mentions of Satan in the Bible, really. And in any case, the mentions leave it open to- he could be interpreted, for example, as God's policeman, the guy who's sent down to earth to test people's faith.

Pike
Although I hope Satan is not a cop. I'm not sure I like that.

Lithos
Yeah, yeah. But I mean, that is one interpretation because the famous thing of like the only time that it is actually mentioned that Satan kills people, I believe, is Job, and Job's family, and that was God actually sending him down to, or challenging him to prove that Job has or doesn't have the faith that Job has.

So kill his family and see if he still believes in God, kind of thing.

Pike
Oh, that is a sadistic game.

Lithos
Yeah, yeah, it is. And you know, he is quite a sadist. I mean, he did the same, didn't he, with- it was Abraham, wasn't it, who's you know, he said, "Kill your son." Yeah. And then at the last minute, he goes, "Just joking!”

Pike
You know what that is? That is evil.

Lithos
Yes. Yes. That is actually literally evil and literally putting one of his angels, his archangels or whatever position Lucifer is supposed to be having or Satan in the Bible, sort of kind of cajoling him into go and murder his family and then oh, that'll prove that he still believes in me kind of thing.

Pike
Right. But so if Satan is not evil, second question was, why do you choose to be evil, Lithos, if Satan is not evil?

Lithos
I don't. Do you?

Pike
Only on Fridays.

Lithos
I think the second one is, I can't, I don't know what the the philosophical concept is, you know, it's a false inference from the first question. Satan is evil, right?

Pike
Yeah, it's clearly somebody who just feels exasperated that doesn't doesn't really understand what we're about and is puzzled. Why would you choose to be evil? But, you know, I ask that question about other people all the time. I'm like, why would you do that? It's such a bad thing to do. You know, just reading the news every day.

Lithos

Yeah, yeah, exactly. There's plenty of evil people in the world. I mean, there's true evil out there, and it has nothing to do with Satan. In fact, a lot of it is perpetrated in the name of various interpretations of God.

Pike

Yeah, indeed. Well, next I've got a question from Dave: I have always done my best to sin every chance I got, but with a full-time job, work-related study, and family responsibilities, there are only so many hours in the day. I am worried that I am getting behind with my sinning. Any advice?

Lithos

Okay, I would say you need you need to get your priorities right, you know. Maybe get your family to join in with the sinning.

Pike

Oh, group sinning. Oh, that came that came across a bit… Yeah, no, that's not what I meant.

Lithos

Yeah, yeah, not in that way with your kids. No, no, that's not what I meant.

Pike

You know, like,

Lithos

Oh God!

Pike

blaspheme with your partner.

Lithos
Yes, yes, and let your kids be free to blaspheme in their own time. of their own choice as well.

Pike
Right.

Lithos
You don't, I mean, sinning is not a requirement per se, is it?

Pike
No, but I think Dave is very concerned about that. I'd say maybe perhaps little and often is key.

Lithos
Yeah.

Pike
Yeah. Yeah, you can squeeze a little a little sin here and there, you know, eat some shellfish maybe.

Lithos
Yeah, yeah. A bit of solo self-care. You know, that kind of thing. It's, you know, it's- yes, I mean, it's- are Dave's family- the question is, are Dave's family behind Dave sinning in this scenario, or do they not approve?

Pike
Um, well, I imagine it's- it's a personal matter, probably, to some degree, provided he's not actually thieving, you know, maybe he's just coveting his neighbour's stuff or something like that.

Lithos
Yeah, coveting his neighbour's ass, ox, whatever.

Pike
Ox, that's right. What else have we got in our bag?

Lithos
Well, I have a very interesting one. This this from a Satanist anonymous, and it, basically it's a Satanist who came out to their parents, and their mother asked them quite seriously, "Well, what's the appropriate thing to say when you sneeze now?"

Pike
Oh.

Lithos
Right. Well, what do you say?

Pike
What do you say?

Lithos
I generally say "Gesundheit" because that's the kind of most appropriate one. I mean, we say "bless you," which is a bit weird. Why would you need to be blessed after a sneeze? I think it's a reference to that. But we don't really have an equivalent to "Gesundheit," do we? Health, you know, that would sound weird.

Pike
Right, right. Yeah, I tend to say, "Can you cover up?"

Lithos
Oh yeah, that's, that's another good one. Yeah, just please put your hand in front of your mouth next time you do that.

Pike
Especially at work.

Lithos
Yeah, which should also be satanic because it is sort of showing that that you're showing compassion towards others. You don't want to make them ill with your bacteria.

Pike
Yeah, it is satanic to be considerate.

Lithos
Yeah, absolutely.

Pike
It is evil to go to work when you are ill and sneeze in front of other people.

Lithos
Absolutely, it definitely is. I kind of had very little patience for, and I think we've probably both worked with people who kind of like just want to show how committed they are to the job and then they turn up, they're ill, they're not really doing anything that productive and they're making everyone else ill.

And you know, all you want to say to them is just fuck off home, go to bed, have a Lem-sip, just come back when you're well.

Pike

Yeah, we have a local um roast eatery, you know, a place where people go for a, like, a full roast. And someone was telling me about a friend who worked there and he phoned up, "I'm ill, I'm, you know, evacuating from all holes." And they're like, "No, we are really short-staffed right now. You have to come in."

Lithos

Oh my God, that's terrible management, isn't it? You kind of like, you're going, that's- you should get a zero on your, on your sort of like hygiene rating.

Pike

Yeah. And uh otherwise, you know, the customers will be uh evacuating from all holes as well by the end of the day if you allow that kind of, you know.

Lithos

Yeah. I mean, it's self-defeating because if people get ill after they've eaten at your place and then they're not gonna come back, you've lost a customer and potentially set yourself up for a lawsuit.

Pike

Or worse, a bad Google review.

Lithos

Oh God, no, you don't want one of those. That can ruin a business.

Pike

Right. What else have we got? We got Demonica57 asking for practical advice: I hate wearing masks for my rituals, although I like how they look. It's hard to see and it's hard to breathe and I'm sweating like a motherfucker. Can you help? Can you relate?

Lithos
I can relate. It is, yes. Even- I chose one because I don't like the masks. Some of them are sort of fairly cheap plastic and they're kind of painful after a while, apart from being really hot. So I kind of chose some black sort of gauzy fabric just to cover my face and that it turns out is every bit as hot as well because your kind of breath just creates this vapour cloud.

And yeah, robes, uh maybe actually the solution is to not wear any clothes under your robe so you don't get hot because you tend to put the robe on over clothes. Um, ice pack on the head, I don't know. Um, a fan? No, that that would kind of blow your hood off, wouldn't it?

I don't know. What's your suggestion?

Pike
Well, I guess you could just not wear any mask at all and you can just paint your whole face. I think it would work really well if you shave your head as well. You could just paint your whole face and head. No, no, not black. Not black. Maybe blue, red, white. You have a lot of- I've got some of this uh you know theatre paint in a kind of thick, greasy white that I think could work really well.

And then you can do proper face paint on top. It's terrible for your skin.

Lithos
Yeah. And is it also sort of clogging your pores up with that? Wouldn't that also sort of make you hot? I don't know. I've never tried corpse paint.

Pike

No, no, it feels very comfortable. It's just you have to clean it off at the end of the night.

Lithos
Hmm.

Pike
And it is a job. And if, like me, you have sensitive skin, you are going to be red-faced for a couple of days.

Lithos
Oh, God. Okay. Yeah, I suffer from eczema, so it might not be the best idea.

Pike
I say maybe I'll test it out for our next gathering, and then I can report back to our listeners.

Lithos
Yeah, do what they what they recommend. Just try it on a small area of your face first and then see how it goes. Yeah, it's true. It depends on how kind of comfortable you feel with other people in the room, whether you're- because you are wearing a robe, there's no reason you need to be fully clothed underneath.

But again, this is a matter of you need to make sure that everyone else in the room is comfortable with that.

Pike
Yeah. And if you're in the forest, then you can throw your robes off and run around. Run around naked. In the snow.

Lithos
Yeah. And just give everyone the cliché of what they think Satanists are, running naked around a fire pit and chanting.

Pike
That sounds like the best.

Lithos
Maybe not in the snow though.

Pike
Yeah.

Lithos
It has got to just below zero up here. It's bloody freezing outside.

Pike
Yeah, I know, same. Woke up to frost.

Lithos
Hmm. Yes.

Pike
So, have we got any other questions?

Lithos
I've got one. Oh yeah, I've got one. It came in, an email came in from papa@vat.icn. No idea who that is. And said, "Thank you for keeping Satan in people's minds. It is vital propaganda that helps further our cause. I'll be thinking about you burning in hell whilst I polish his saviour's boots."

Pike
Wow. I mean, it's-

Lithos
No idea.

Pike
It's kind of touching, I guess.

Lithos
Yeah.

Pike
Um, I think- I guess would rather burn in hell than- polish the Saviour's boots.

Lithos
Yeah, I mean, it depends. I mean, I always thought he wore sandals, but, you know, I don't know. Maybe-

Pike
Perhaps he upgraded in heaven, you know.

Lithos
Wash his feet, because wasn't that a thing in the Bible that someone washed his feet?

Pike
This person needs to go and read their Bible. They're not getting their facts straight.

Lithos
Yes, Papa, whoever you are. You know, read the good book, please do, and act accordingly.

Pike
Yes, indeed. Then we have uh the next question comes from our extremely regular listener. We'll take their word for it. Dicknickem@hotmail.hell. I'm not sure that's an- that email address exists. I am suspicious of this already. But-

Lithos
Well, if you've ever used Hotmail, it is pretty shit. So- Yeah.

Pike
That's true. No, I somehow avoided it. I do remember it though. I remember Hotmail days. I'm old enough.

Lithos
MSN Messenger. Yes. Carry on. What was the question?

Pike
Yes. And ICQ.
The Abrahamic religions have formed a certain theological richness over thousands of years via a combination of prescriptive rules, authoritative theological interpretations, and a plethora of parables and other lesson-teaching tools. Given that Romantic Satanism minimises prescriptive rules to maximise autonomy, rejects arbitrary authority, and is a recent arrival to the religious table, from where does can it derive its theological richness?

So I'm just gonna- that's a lot of long words, Dicknickem, so I'm just gonna Summarise the question, uh, which is basically: "Without nutters roaming the streets dressed in sandwich boards and chunky books filled with utter nonsense, isn't Satanism a bit plain?"

Lithos

Hmm. Right. That's a bit- that's- that is a big question. The theological- I am going to have to have a look at that, the actual wording of that question.

Pike

We don't have enough frills, basically. That's what he's saying.

Lithos

Yes. Yes.

Pike

No stories, we got no stories, we got no rules, we don't have hierarchies and drama and uh lessons learned from people straying from the path and getting punished.

Lithos

Yes.

Pike

Is it true?

Lithos

I mean, I don't know. I think we do have a certain theological richness. I wouldn't particularly go with the word theological, but there is a philosophical or maybe even spiritual richness to be derived from making up your own rules and rituals because you have personal investiture and involvement in creating the richness.

The rituals, the, for want of a better word, scriptures, the writing, you know.

Pike
Right. Well, and are B-movies not a legitimate source of richness and inspiration?

Lithos
Yeah, absolutely.

Pike
If not, uh, we do have, so we also have thousands of years because whenever people had their, you know, uh, Abrahamic gods, they also had The Other. So there are stories. There are stories about the devil. There are stories about Satan. There is rich imagery. Um, you know, then you have the witchcraft.

You have, you have so much, even up to the 19th century. And then in the 19th century, we obviously have uh all the romantic Satanism stuff.

Lithos
Yeah. And again, you can fall back on that and kind of use that as a basis. To kind of elaborate it, make up your own sort of stories behind it, or interpret stories, be they kind of like seeing Satan as the hard done by figure, as in romantic Satanism, or be it the sort of stories from the other side, from the Abrahamic side, about Satan being the bad guy.

You can kind of interpret them differently. You can make up your own interpretations. And I would say there's a lot more value in that than in just looking at what has been written and kind of going by the rules that have been set and the rituals that have been set for you, which you have- you literally have no input into.

You know, say you go to church, it is the vicar the pastor, the priest, whatever, who relies on scripture and then decides how this goes, and it follows a set pattern. And you can make up your own pattern. You can kind of make up your own- basically, it's making it up as you go along is actually very valuable, I would say.

Pike

It is make your own adventure. And that's why it is richer because every person coming to it brings their own. Uh, so, you know, however many Satanists you have, so many different ways of seeing. I mean, we don't, I think I say we are short on prescriptive rules. That is true. That is true.

I think we should come up with a few just to, you know, measure up.

Lithos

I mean, we haven't we haven't really got prescriptive rules per se. We've got sort of 9 principles or depending on what branch of Satanism, you know, the one we're in, it's kind of like there's 9 principles to kind of guide, just to give you an idea of, yeah, this is a decent way to behave.

But there's no specifically no prescriptive rules about don't do this, don't do that. You know, it's more like- yes, you were gonna say.

Pike

I got one. If you eat fish, leave the bones on the plate. Yes. That is mine. Well, I've got one. You can make up your own and, you know, hail you.

Lithos

Yeah. And whatever you do, if you eat fish, don't swallow the bones. That's the worst thing you can do.

Pike
Yeah, yeah, definitely don't do that. Um. What else have we got?

Lithos
I've got um question here, another one we've been asked, um kind of: What do I have to do to be a real, inverted commas, Satanist? Do I need to join a Satanic group? How long does it take to convert to Satanism? So that's 3 questions really.

Pike
Right. Um, so what do I have to do to be a real Satanist? Well, I think you do need to sacrifice a baby.

Lithos
Yes. If you can't get hold of one of those, a goat will do.

Pike
And if you can't get hold of a goat or you like goats, we generally like goats, then I guess you just sit down and declare yourself a Satanist and you know, you're welcome to do a little ritual if that pleases you or not if it doesn't. And uh feel fortified by a newly found Satanism and look for community if community helps, or be a lone wolf if that's your way.

Lithos
Absolutely. And we don't sacrifice goats or babies. We like goats and we like babies.

Pike
Yeah. Yeah.

Lithos

So, you know, um.

Pike
That was me being flippant. I am sorry.

Lithos
Absolutely. I think probably our listeners have figured this out by now.

Pike
I just get so fed up being told that I'm not a real Satanist because I'm not sacrificing any you know goats, virgins, babies, whatever, animals, people. I do get that a lot. Mostly from one person.

Lithos
I did kind of like- this was step daughter who, when she heard that I joined the satanic group, was kind of worried at first and then, you know, and went, what sort of like- thinking do you do animal sacrifice? And I said, well, no, some of us are vegans. You can't, we don't do animal sacrifice.

It can't be, you know, it doesn't happen. Um, yes, and real Satanist is by definition what you want it to be. It's a religion about the self. So you define your own Satanism. You can be, yeah, a solo Satanist, a hedge Satanist, basically. Yeah.

Pike
I just want to say, I do notice that thing as well, where people will uh first feel scared or intimidated, and then once they realise there's nothing to be afraid of, then they get a bit like, oh, you're not a real Satanist. And I think that's maybe a bit of that initial fear coming out, you know.

Lithos

I think, I mean, just like any other religion or creed or philosophy, you will have people who, just like when you talk to socialists, you will have people who say you're not real socialists because you don't follow the teachings of Marx or whatever. You know, you'll have people who say you're not a real Satanist because you don't follow Anton LaVey or whatever.

You know, you kind of define your own, and we are not exempt from this. There are people who will argue in the satanic community about who is a real Satanist and who isn't. And it's like, once you're doing that, you're kind of like losing the battle, because why are you so upset about the definition of what a Satanist is if you're defining it yourself?

Pike

Yeah, yeah. And you know, why be so precious about it as well? Just let people- that's- isn't that one of the one of the satanic principles? You have to let people be who they are and live how they live. And if they want to identify as Satanist and it's not your definition of Satanism, well, you know.

Lithos

Yeah, yeah, exactly. It's kind of like you don't want to- you don't want to be a gatekeeper of, you know, the holy grail of Satanism. And as to the how long does it take to convert to Satanism, converting is not a thing that exists for Satanists, certainly not for the Satanists I know.

It's like that- that's a very Catholic term.

Pike

Oh yeah, they walked me into a tar pit and then they lit up some flames and they poured some stuff on my head and then I had to recite something and then I was converted. And it could happen to you too.

Lithos
Yes. I mean, we have done things like initiation rituals for people who wanted, and that is literally just for you to, as an individual, to affirm your Satanism in front of a group of like-minded people. I've gone through that, and it didn't mean I was suddenly a Satanist. I was before.

It just helped me affirm in front of a group of like-minded people that I rejected Abrahamic faith and was a Satanist. And that's kind of like, for me, it was quite important as someone who had been christened against my will because I was too tiny at the time to know any difference, you know, as a baby, into Catholicism.

And, you know, to actually do that in an actual ritual and affirm it in front of people, although literally it means nothing in terms of what kind of a Satanist you are, it meant a lot to me personally.

Pike
That's a good answer.

Lithos
And um the conversion thing is kind of like it kind of harks back to you know, the Catholic rituals about First Communion, Confirmation, blah blah blah, which doesn't exist in all Abrahamic faiths. For example, in Islam, you just have to recite the Shahada. You say the Shahada and you mean it.

And then the Shahada is literally saying, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger." You know, and that's it. And then you follow the pillars of Islam and you live your life according to the many, many, many, many fucking rules. But there is no kind of like conversion, like converting to Catholicism or Anglicanism or whatever.

Pike
And there's no excommunication.

Lithos
No.

Pike
In Satanism, I mean.

Lithos
Yeah, I don't know about Islam. I you know, I believe that there are, depending on the interpretation, various ways of treating- I mean, in a lot of some religions, I'm not singling Islam out here. I mean, arguably, the Jehovah's Witnesses are one of the worst at treating people who have left the faith.

Pike
What do they do to them?

Lithos
You're supposed to shun them. You have nothing to do with them, right? You turn your back on them. It is like literally, you know, it is kind of a cult in that way, and lots of cults operate on that basis that, you know, you kind of like shun your friends and family when you're in the cult because they might influence you.

And then when you leave, everyone that you've gotten used to in your friendship group doesn't even talk to you. They just cold shoulder. And that is part of Jehovah's Witness philosophy, for the want of a better word.

Pike

Grim.

Lithos
You leave, you're dead to us.

Pike
Yeah. On a lighter note, we have an anonymous writer who asks, I get 25 days of holidays per year and I go like to go on a satanic pilgrimage, but I'm starting to run out of ideas. What satanic sites or landmarks should I visit next?

Lithos
Oh, that's a good one. Right.

Pike
Wow, you got so excited about it. Okay, let's hear it.

Lithos
I'm just trying to think. I mean, it depends on how- if you're more on the gothy side of Satanism, then Whitby, um, you know.

Pike
For the Goth Weekend or just to see the Dracula cemetery?

Lithos
Any time, really. I mean, yeah, the Goth Weekend, by all accounts, it's absolutely crowded to the max. But I think at any time of the year, from what I've- I've not been there. From what I've heard, it's kind of like a fairly gothy place just because of the association to Bram Stoker. So, you know, that sounds like if you're sort of into that, like the kind of more goth side of it.

I don't know, have you got any ideas of pilgrimage sites?

Pike

I've heard people complaining about the Goth Weekend saying, "Oh, those people are not even goths." You know, they just rent out these steampunk costumes and blah, blah, blah. But that sounds pretty good to me. I know there's a place called Fire Lake in Quebec. I don't know. I don't know how, how true the name is to, to the actual setting, but I'd, I would love to go there.

Can you say the name in French? Québécois French.

Lithos

Québécois French. What's it called?

Pike

Fire Lake.

Lithos

Fire Lake. Lac du Feu, I would guess, would be it, but I haven't come across that.

Pike

Yes. Thank you. Also, I think uh Mel said that she would like to go to Salem. Was it Salem?

Lithos

Oh yes. Salem. Yes.

Pike

Salem.

Lithos
Yes, where the witch trials were. Unfortunately, that is also the headquarters of the Satanic Temple.

Pike
Well, live and let live.

Lithos
Yeah, absolutely. Which, nothing personal against the many, many really decent people in the Satanic Temple and committed Satanists. But the leadership, I mean, I definitely have issues with. Lucian, Lucian Greaves, who seems to be a bit of a fucking self-serving publicist who likes paying solicitors and lawyers. So, yeah, I wouldn't be keen on visiting that because that's where all the dickheads in charge hang out.

Pike
Yeah.

Lithos
But Salem itself, yeah, because of the history. There's also the Hellfire, where the Hellfire Club used to hang out in the UK, and I'm trying to remember where that was. There are locations, but none spring to mind. As in, I can't think of where they are.

Pike
Okay.

Lithos
Um, Satanic pilgrimage. It's a really good question. Damn. Um.

Pike
We have no idea. Go to hell. Go to hell, anonymous writer.

Lithos
There are there are definitely several things not just in the UK, but across the world called the Devil's Grotto or Devil's something or other.

Pike
Oh yeah. We've been told about this, um, church and uh in Portugal, I think. And there, I think there are some in Italy and Spain, churches with of bones where you have structures of like bones and skulls, which is a fun thing to see.

Lithos
Or you you could just go to the sort of like the uh Notre Dame or somewhere and just defile it with by your very presence.

Pike
Transylvania.

Lithos
Transylvania. There's- Transylvania is one of the most polluted places in- certainly in Europe. There has been, because the mountains there are rich in gold and other rare minerals. Edit note: uh the place is called Geamăna and the deposits are mainly copper with some gold as well. And under communism, under Ceaușescu, they started mining and they do the mining by just basically destroying a mountain and then processing it chemically because it's not sort of like, well, you imagine, oh, gold being, yeah, there's a gold seam.

No, it's kind of in the rocks. And then you have to extract it with really toxic chemicals. And they have a massive tailings lake in Transylvania. And I'm trying

to remember the name of the place. They sunk a village and it's getting bigger every year. And you can just see the church spire sticking out in the middle of this lake that looks like a scene from Dante's Inferno.

It is gross and it is extremely- yeah, I mean, you don't want to go anywhere near it. You know, it would kind of dissolve your skin. And it's being held back by a dam. And if that dam bursts, it risks via various waterways polluting an awful lot of mainland Europe. And there's not just one.

And there there is a Canadian company that's now going in and starting their own gold mining.

Pike
Of course.

Lithos
In the mountains. And again, it's the same thing. And people there are protesting about it and people there have been poisoned. I will find a YouTube video I watched on this. There's a couple that have gone into this and I'll put them in the show notes. It is a terrible, terrible thing and it is a really sad part of the history of Romania.

It is one of the most beautiful areas in Romania. You know, there are mountains, there are real forests, there are a lot of people had their own sort of rural agriculture, living quite happily, and then people discovered, oh, there's stuff in these mountains. Fuck everyone who lives here.

Pike
Yeah. That is evil.

Lithos
That is that is true evil. You are right.

Pike
Yeah, when I, I was thinking about this and I- about the idea of pilgrimage, and apparently Muslims have a pilgrimage that's called Stoning of the Devil or Stoning of Satan.

Lithos
Oh, really?

Pike
Yeah, so they just do their, you know, Hajj to, um, to Mecca and then just throw stones at the wall, which is a bit of a- must be a bit of a letdown with a name like that, you know. You're like, I'm going to stone the devil, and then…

Lithos
And it's just a wall.

Pike
It's just a wall. It's always just a wall. Yeah. Yeah.

Lithos
Well, there's plenty of ideas. I'm not suggesting the toxic lake in Romania, by the way. Definitely not. You don't want to go on a pilgrimage there unless you want to see the atrocity that humans can commit on beautiful nature.

Pike
Yeah, but you can see that here in the UK as well. So there's really no need to travel that far.

Lithos
Absolutely.

Pike
Now, before we go into a rant, have we got any more questions?

Lithos
I think I might have a question here. Yes, here's an interesting one. If you don't have a god or higher power, then how are you a religion?

Pike
Ah, so this is uh again, is a non-theistic religion a religion? Well, it depends how you define a religion. So some people define a religion in a way where there has to be a deity, in which case, fine, we're- to those people, we're not a religion. And then um- but the definition where, to which deity is not necessary, is also legitimate. You can, I don't know, you can look it up on Wikipedia, the ultimate authority of everything in the world. So a religion, there is no clear definition of religion, but there are some ideas that are seen as intrinsic to religion. So for example, the idea of a religious ritual, right?

So something that's done for some kind of uh spiritual purpose rather than um practical purpose, I guess. Or there is a commu- religious community, right? A community that's united by this set of beliefs. So if you see a religion as a set of beliefs about the world, about your place in life and so on, then, my friend, we are a religion.

Lithos
Yeah, yeah, it is. I would see religion as something that has some kind of mystical, mythological, whatever sort of archetypal icon for maybe one of the- you'd think of

something like Buddhism and following the teachings of Buddha. There is no concept that Buddha is a god per se.

Pike

They do, I think they do have some kind of gods, but they exist on this other plane and you know, don't really- interfere with humans or play much of a part.

Lithos

Because there are many strands of Buddhism as well. There are as many strands of Buddhism as there are of any other religion, including ours. So, you know, you go to China and uh some of the religious practices are ancestor worship. So you worship your ancestors. They are not gods. They are- in Japan, Shintoism is worship of Japan.

Like, Japan is sacred. The rocks, the trees in Japan are sacred. You know, so it's not like a god figure. It doesn't have to be a god figure.

Pike

Yeah. And I think it doesn't have to be a higher power either, you know.

Lithos

No. Or the higher power can be the individual in Satanism, I would say. As long as you don't think of yourself as a higher power over others, it is you are the higher power in your life and everyone else is a higher power in their lives, and you acknowledge that.

Pike

I love that. That's a great way to look at it. I guess you would be- I was going to say to talk about equal power, but actually, to yourself, you are a higher power.

You value your opinion, your judgement above somebody else's unless there's a compelling reason, you know, to look else…

Yeah.

Lithos

Or you just say the most important thing, you know, if you are absolutely blatantly honest, the most important thing in anyone's life is themselves. So you are the most important thing in your life. That doesn't mean, because then you, if you think of it in more of an Anton LaVey type sense, you know, where his idea was more like Satanists are better than others, you know, they're stronger, they're more powerful.

Um, you kind of like go, you are the most important thing in your life, but that counts for everyone, so you can't put yourself above other people. If you know, this is how I see it anyway.

Pike

Yeah, don't be a dick. It's it's a good- it's an internet cliché, but it's also a good rule of thumb for life. Right. Um.

Lithos

Yeah, absolutely.

Pike

Well, let's- shall we have one more for good measure?

Lithos

Yes, go for it.

Pike

So, Anonymous writes: You're just trying to make fun of genuinely religious people. Religious, I guess. Just like the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster. You don't really, in caps lock, believe anything you're saying. You are just pretending to have a faith and making a stupid joke. Oh, it's the same as the previous question, isn't it?

Lithos
Kind of.

Pike
But do you believe what you believe?

Lithos
Mm.

Pike
Yes.

Lithos
Yeah. I mean, I know that certainly I have made on this, and on this podcast, and off this podcast, made fun of religious people, specific kinds of religious people, you know, the Pope, due to hypocrisy, people who claim to follow Jesus Christ, but their Jesus has guns and hates Black people kind of thing, or, you know, hates, thinks that women are subservient, that those kind of- but I don't want to make fun of genuinely religious people who actually live by their faith and are decent people. There are plenty of them.

Pike

And if you make fun of um organised religion, I mean, these are big power structures. It is punching up. It's not going to harm them a whole lot. And who cares?

Lithos

Yes, indeed. I mean, it's not- I don't I don't think- I think we certainly believe in what we're saying. And we're not pretending to have a faith, and it's not a joke to us. And we might, where we might joke about other religions, we are joking about specific people who are abusing their own religion for their own nefarious purposes.

Would you agree with that?

Pike

Yes, yes, absolutely. And we welcome humour. Which I guess many religious- well, it depends, depends on the- but uh a lot of the time in organised religion, humour is discouraged. You're not supposed to joke about, you know, your beliefs or whatever we do. Although I've met also religious people who are different and can joke about their beliefs and it's fine.

And we do laugh a lot. It doesn't mean we don't take it seriously.

Lithos

Yeah. And I think a certain amount of kind of like we will do jokes about Satan as well. You know, a certain amount of like, piss-taking of your own iconography is healthy. There is there is no reason to take yourself too seriously, you know, and it wouldn't ever get to the stage where we'd go, well, don't you dare joke about Satan or else we'll come round your house and burn it down, kind of thing.

Pike

We'll write 666 on the door.

Lithos
Yes. We'll take your firstborn child and that- oh no, that was God who did that.

Pike
All right. Well, is there anything else you want to contribute or are we wrapping up here?

Lithos
I think we can wrap up here. I think we've pretty much covered all the questions. And

Pike
Yeah.

Lithos
Yeah.

Pike
I think we did a marvellous job at answering these very challenging and complicated questions. from uh our readers of various persuasions. If you too have a question you want to ask, uh do drop us a line. As you see, we don't really discriminate whether your question is excellent or really dumb. We will answer it all the same.

Lithos
Absolutely.

Pike

Uh so this has been Devil's Discourse. With Lithos.

Lithos

Hail Satan.

Pike

And uh your host, your guest host, Pike. Hail Satan and hail yourselves. Dun dun dun dun.