

Fear – Types Of Fear

Dr. Michael Laitman Education Series

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The topic we began talking about in the previous show was fear and anxiety. Last time, we discussed the essence of fear, why fear exists and where it comes from. Today we want to talk about types of fears, their origin and purpose.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: This time I would like to start with a topic that interests many parents, a child's fear of the dark. A child enters a room and says, "I am afraid" and wants his mommy. How did he learn to be afraid of the dark?

Michael Laitman: Aren't you afraid?

Adva Bar-Yehuda: Not like my son.

Michael Laitman: There's no such thing, everyone is afraid of the dark, it depends on the type of darkness. As we discussed on the previous program, fear is the actual foundation of our traits. It is a trait that we shouldn't eliminate, but rise above it. Fear evolves from fear of this world to fear of the next world, fear that relates to Divinity, that we are not realizing ourselves. So fear of the dark is the most fundamental of all fears, the very first one.

Eli Vinokur: Why is it the most basic fear of all? What is it about the dark that makes it so?

Michael Laitman: Darkness is creation itself.

Eli Vinokur: Creation is darkness?

Michael Laitman: Creation is darkness, yes, "Forming Light and creating darkness." What is creation? *Beria* (creation) comes from the word *Bar* (outside), meaning outside of the Creator, and this is what we are afraid of. Meaning, subconsciously, we are afraid of being outside, like a child is afraid of being far from his mother. So fear of the dark is actually fear of spiritual darkness, a lack of the Light, the absence of the Creator, my origin. And I can complement it only by developing the feeling, awareness, understanding, and His revelation from within the darkness.

We should understand that the fear of darkness is essential, necessary, and we should not wipe it out because if we did, we would not want to emerge from it and advance toward the Light. That darkness, as Kabbalah describes it, is the "posterior side" of the Light. It is "help made against him," where it helps by seemingly being against. In that way, it pushes us toward the Light.

Therefore, using the darkness correctly and turning one type of darkness into a second, third, and fourth type of darkness means that through these types I can rise in degree. That way, I gradually view darkness not as lack of corporeal benefits such as money or honor or even knowledge, but as a lack of higher observations, spiritual ones. In other words, darkness is the processing of something, so I welcome the darkness, but darkness from lack of higher things.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: Given this explanation, if a child is afraid of the dark, what guidelines can we offer the parents?

Michael Laitman: First, we can say that darkness is something good, it is good the child is afraid. Imagine a small child leaving the house at night and going for a walk without caring about anything, clearly, it is better for him to be wary, isn't it? In other words, there is no such thing as something bad, it depends on how we use it. If he is afraid of the dark, it is good.

Now, how can we work with his fear of the dark so he will want to advance correctly? We must guide him according to his age, to explain to him that there is nothing in the darkness. However, that may not help either because we, too, are afraid of the dark. If I am in a dark and unfamiliar place, it's very frightening. This is clear to everyone and no one can feel comfortable in a situation like that. However, we are not afraid because we understand the situation and we are in familiar territory. When I get out of bed at night, I know where to go with my eyes, shut, right? And then I am not afraid to be in the dark and don't even switch on the light, right?

In other words, it isn't the darkness, it is fear of the unknown. This is the problem. So make him know the unknown. He needs to know what is behind the darkness, that the darkness is there only to push him forward so he will truly know what exists, and then the darkness won't seem dark. As I just said, when I get up at night, I don't even switch on the light because the darkness doesn't bother me, since I know, and the knowledge takes the place of the darkness. Time and time again, we need to switch on the light and explain, only through explanations.

Eli Vinokur: Perhaps he should just sleep with the light on?

Michael Laitman: Perhaps, it doesn't hurt.

What we should *not* do is put a child in a position of facing his fears. Either we complement it for him with knowledge or we help him in some other way, but we do not leave him facing his fear alone. It is wrong to leave him there with no solution.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: I would like to shift from fear to lack of success. I can understand adults' fear of failing, but when a three-year old child begins to show signs of fear of not succeeding, how can that be explained?

Michael Laitman: Lack of social support begins at the age of three. Until that age, they have no sense of society at all.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: So the sense of lack of support begins?

Michael Laitman: Yes, perhaps in our days it is two or two and a half years old, I don't know, but the age of three is how it was in previous generations. Before that they don't know what a society is, they don't sense it. From three onwards they begin to discern things like "I'm friends with this one," "I play with that one," and "That one plays with this one," "We are together, or we are not." He begins to develop a sense of society. That is why all the fears from three years on can be resolved through society, we only need to know how to do it. Even in regard to darkness, friends can enter the room before him, or better yet, they can enter together, before all the scrutinies, before switching on the light, before everything. Let them enter a dark room together, start walking around there, going wild, jumping, even breaking a few things, whatever. It'll break their fear of the dark.

Eli Vinokur: Ok. Now, how do we help a child overcome the fear of constantly comparing himself to others, what people will say about me, what the friends at kindergarten will say, what my mother will say, what my father will say, what everyone will say?

Michael Laitman: No, it's not at those ages, certainly not at the age of three. Now you're talking about competing to be the leader and this begins around the age of say seven or eight or nine.

Here there needs to be work in their society. We need to understand that a person is part of the society; he cannot be taken out and treated separately. Actually, this is the source of all our failures with children: We take a child to a therapist for twenty sessions, pay and say goodbye. Regrettably, we don't see that it is actually treating.

In fact, it is more of a treatment for the parents than for the children. It makes the children calmer, and the parents think, "Well, we gave the child everything possible; we clarified the problem through the sessions with the therapist." But the child's situation hasn't changed. It is still as it was because we don't understand that for them, *society is everything*. Fears, anxieties, success, failure, pretending to succeed where he is actually not, acting against all them, all of that depends on society. So can you treat the child separately, without the entire class?

Adva Bar-Yehuda: So it should be group work?

Michael Laitman: Have a psychologist assigned to each class, that is my solution. Very simple, a therapist per class. He will get to know them, understand them, study them, know their parents, mingle with them, play with them, and argue with them. He will get hit, hit back, exactly like them. They must accept him. He has to be one of them. Otherwise it won't work. Otherwise, he's not a psychologist.

He must be their friend. They mustn't feel him as superior. This is how he should work with them, being like them while still knowing how to influence each one specifically through them.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: Can the parent be like that too?

Michael Laitman: No, it has to be an expert, a professional. It is group psychology for classes, schools. And not even for all the classes or all the schools; it depends on the culture and the customs. But without this kind of work we will not find we're bringing up the next generation properly, that we are giving them a good life.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: A few months ago, a story was published about an 11 year old boy who actually fabricated his own kidnapping from A to Z, arriving home all wet and beat up, and it turned out that he did it all to avoid an exam he was terrified of. How can we explain what happened to him?

Michael Laitman: It is probably much easier to take the exam than to go through all those manipulations, tribulations and problems. The problem is that we are not guiding them how to relate to life's occurrences properly. We're not helping them give the right proportions to life's events. "So you lost, well, what if you did?" "You lost, so you are not the best." "So people think badly of you." "Perhaps you even stole something. Okay, so what?" Some people pay a fine for it, others go to jail, but that is still not the end of the world. It can happen to anyone. Let's put a million dollars in front of someone, a billion in front of someone else, and one hundred in front of another, and let's see. Everyone one has a limit, and beyond that limit he would steal for sure.

Explain these things to him and relate. People don't know about their nature. They look at themselves as if something happened with them that is not happening with others. They don't understand that they are one of many, and they all have the same thing. They don't understand how other people behave. They think that the people they respect are angels from Heaven.

The same thing happens to us later in adolescence with boys and girls. They aren't familiar with the behavior of the other sex, so they have all kinds of problems with that. Each one plays a kind of game that distorts the opposite sex and evokes them into incorrect behavior.

In short, Each class must have its own psychologist assigned to it. Until that happens, and these psychologists become experts in knowing what we need to create with those children, what it takes to build a human being out of each of them, we won't succeed at all. I think that this is far more important than their studies and all those exams.

Eli Vinokur: And what is the next stage? Do we say, "It's not that terrible?" But it is. It needs to be treated. Or is it ok and that's it?

Michael Laitman: It's okay.

Eli Vinokur: It's okay?

Michael Laitman: There is no punishment, the way he understands it. You don't punish him, you explain to him: "You behaved according to your nature. Let's see together why you were born with those things, and do others have it, too. Let's see what nature wants of us and how we should handle it.

In other words, if we have such traits, those traits must be there for a purpose. They must be leading us somewhere. There is no bad in a person, so perhaps if I overcome them, I would get to something good. Let's see what reward will I have by not stealing, or what reward will I have by not hitting others, what reward will I have by bonding with others. Let's see why I have been made in this particular way, with all my bad qualities, which I constantly have to overcome. What I will gain by it? We need to explain it, as well as provide social support.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: What do I gain from overcoming?

Michael Laitman: We grownups don't beat each other up or curse just like that because we understand that this is a more pleasant way to live. This way, at least I know that we are more or less interested in building a pleasant society for ourselves, as much as possible. If we bring our children up correctly, they will build a much better society for themselves.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: There is a certain trend to not bring the concept of fear into the family. People think that by that, the children's fears will completely disappear. Is there any sense in that, or is that not a good thing to do?

Michael Laitman: According to the wisdom of Kabbalah, that whole approach is incorrect. It is wrong to pool a child one way or another. First, we need to build the proper system. Older ones need to know how to work with the young ones. And not just with the young ones, but with groups of younger ones.

Our world is integral, global, a small village. There is a reason why we are all connected with each other. We need to relate to the child individually, but to the whole group, to the class, to his surroundings. We need to give them general treatment, and general means jointly.

So why make things disappear?

Let's hold a kind of trial at the end of each day. Every day we will have other judges. In a six-day week, let's say that out of a group of thirty children, we take five kids as the judges each day, and they report to us whatever happened during the day at class. The last lesson in the day will be a trial, and those five children will now judge the others. Let's see what they saw, how they will speak, why things happen, etc, how they summarize the day, and everyone will hear and will be able to agree or disagree.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: What do we gain from that?

Michael Laitman: First of all, we gain critical thinking, examination, scrutiny. And the educator among them, the assigned psychologist, helps them, directing them to view it properly. And at the end of each such session, they write their own book of laws, in class, regulations, a constitution, and afterwards we behave accordingly. By that, a child begins to see how he is building himself and building society. When they grow, they will want to build a lawful society, a good society.

Eli Vinokur: Can this be implemented in a smaller group, perhaps even in the family, where at the end of the day, we summarize the day with the children?

Michael Laitman: This is something even a family can do with several children, yes.

Eli Vinokur: So each day, we decide on the rules for tomorrow.

Michael Laitman: Yes, but the parents have to come down to the level of the children.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: What does that mean? Do I participate as well?

Michael Laitman: Of course you do, like a little girl, like your own daughter, and so does your husband.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: And the parents might break the rules, too?

Michael Laitman: At the children's level, that is the format, and we all participate.

Eli Vinokur: Do we talk to them at their level or as if they were adults?

Michael Laitman: No, at their level, so it is clear to all.

Adva Bar-Yehuda: Can everyone make mistakes and be afraid?

Michael Laitman: Yes. Let's say that my mom tells me that today I couldn't hold myself back and I ate a cookie when I wasn't supposed to, so now I feel bad. What should I do? How do I get rid of this feeling? Can you recommend something?

It is not a game, there is great depth in that: how one copes, and if he doesn't, whether he should eat his heart out or not, and how he can calm himself down and still be strong the next day. There truly is a great lesson here.

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