

Financial Crisis & The World's Future

Dr. Michael Laitman Interview Series

With Hank Sheinkopf, Political Public Affairs & Governmental
Affairs Consultant for Over 30 Years



Host: As always, I'm joined by Dr. Michael Laitman, Professor of Ontology and Kabbalah, who also has a doctorate in Philosophy. He's the founder and director of the Bnei Baruch Kabbalah Institute.

Joining us today is Hank Sheinkopf, who has a very, very long resume that I'm going to summarize because otherwise we'd lose all of our time. Hank is part of CNN's *Best Political Team*. He has been a political public affairs and governmental affairs consultant for over 30 years; he has worked with a countless number of politicians, going from Bill Clinton to Michael Bloomberg. He has worked on political campaigns on four continents, nine foreign nations, and 46 American states, and is a political commentator on CNN, Fox News, the BBC, National Public Radio, CBS, NBC, and the list goes on and on and on. Thank you for joining us today.

Hank Sheinkopf: Thank you for having me today.

Host: When I was doing my research, I found an interesting parallel between you and Dr. Laitman. Both of you, from different perspectives and different times, predicted in one way, shape, form, or another, the financial crisis. Actually, with Dr. Laitman it goes back to 2005 in a book that he wrote [From Chaos to Harmony](#), and for you, I think it was 2006.

Hank Sheinkopf: I did. I predicted it on CNN and in other places, and I did a lot of speaking publicly about this, and people looked at me like I was nuts. And I said, very simply, "if you read, if you are...." My training is as a political scientist, and I went back, an interesting aside, I'm

going to finish my doctorate pretty quickly. I went back after 30 years because I just wanted to do it. I did extensive reading and I came to a couple of conclusions, which is: You cannot have a 65 trillion dollar world debt and a 35 trillion dollar world GDP, and a listing of debt nomenclature by name that would rival what physicians throughout the world call the *PDR (The Physicians' Desk Reference)* in listings, or the medical billing system in the United States, if you had that similar kind of debt in name that no one had ever heard of before, and expect that this could function. You cannot do this! This is not how people have lived. If you look at societies overall, and Kevin Phillips and others have made these important arguments in books they've written, where debt becomes the product, the societies tend to become dissolute.

Michael Laitman: But my question, if I may, what is the reason? Because according to the wisdom of Kabbalah, we are already in a situation, and it's not the first crisis. We reached a crisis several decades ago. There was a crisis in family units, in education, people getting divorced, and depression rates soaring. Drug abuse has risen tremendously, to be detached from problems. And for decades, the world has been in it. Also, humanity is constantly advancing through the ego, which is evolving and heightening in people. We've come to a state where now we're all confined in our egos, all interdependent, and that's why it's a global crisis.

Is it possible, in this situation where we're all dependent on each other, to resolve it with the ordinary tools? Is the problem not in humanity and in people who have to shift from hatred to mutual consideration; otherwise we won't resolve this connection? It's like a family that's hateful toward each other, but we can't divorce each other; we're all together on earth.

Hank Sheinkopf: I would posit the following: that this is a repetitive compulsion that human beings have. If you look at the present set of circumstances, it is very much, not like 1938, which is too quick to jump on, but like 1931, where the Japanese went into Manchuria because they wanted to expand their economy and they needed fuel. So they went there and they took over Manchuria; they renamed Manchuria. They took the resources; they created a blue-water fleet, which the Chinese have done, which was in violation, by the way, at the time in 1931, of international treaties, as I recall. They went into competition with others to get fuel, and in order to do so, the world was ignited in war.

The argument that we are interdependent: We were interdependent in war; we were interdependent in peace, and with the computerization of the world, and the exportation of so-called American democratic ideals, but evinced primarily by economics.

Host: Hank, do you think we're heading towards war over a long period of time? I'm not talking about the next year or two.

Hank Sheinkopf: I think the danger between, the ultimate danger, not so much between the United States and other nations, but the danger for the world is a conflict that might grow beyond its present setting, which is, it's been going on for quite some time between the Chinese and the Indians. It's not insignificant because they both have the same needs, which is needs for oil or other fuels to drive their economies, and they have tasted the good life. Once one tastes the good life, it is very difficult to go backwards.

Host: Dr. Laitman, how do you see all these forces acting? What do you see as the root cause of this?

Michael Laitman: I think the root cause is that nature is a common force that we're inside of, and not outside of nature. In our evolution over the millennia, we've come to a point that now we have to balance ourselves with nature. It's as if we're exploiting nature, and instead of being balanced in terms of reception and giving with the world that we're in, we're like a cancer cell, constantly consuming and consuming, regardless of where we are.

Host: What breaks the cycle?

Michael Laitman: I think that what we are seeing today, now that we're in a situation where we're all so connected, it's as if we are with such an ego that it has connected us all together, locked us in, in one mechanism, and now we have no choice. We're going to have to achieve balance between ourselves and with the whole of nature. That's what I think, and we won't be able to resolve the problem of this crisis in the ordinary way, the ordinary regulation. The problem here is more of a human problem: people's relationships. We're going to have to approach that.

Host: And you believe this goes to the relationship between nations as well?

Michael Laitman: Well, yes. At least that's how I see it from what I studied in science and what I know from Kabbalah. We're going to have to come to a point where we balance the whole world. Otherwise, all of this negative feedback that we're getting with the plagues, with ecology, and there is more, a lot more ahead of us, which is coming up in terms of plagues and blows; we won't be able to get rid of these things unless we find the right answers.

Host: Do you think what Obama is doing now is going to help, or do you think it's all sort of fruitless or pointless?

Michael Laitman: No, I don't think so. I hang my hopes on only one thing that through the media, through mass media, through a mass kind of strike in education, specifically in education, as much as it may seem remote and ineffective because we like to judge things and to change the world by money or by force; here we have to change our awareness.

Host: Hank, do you think that education is the answer, or do you think that the policies of, for example, President Obama are going to help? Or maybe even just help in the short term?

Hank Sheinkopf: What is the thing that the President can do now that makes the most sense is to try to protect the Americans from their own excesses, like by getting the banks in line, by getting corporations to function appropriately; that's the short-term fix.

Long term, so long as you have people going across international borders to do that which they want.... Political scientists, I think Amy Chu has written extensively about what happens in economies that are subsumed or overtaken by external global profiteers and what the result is. We see it in Sierra Leone and other places where violence follows. So how do you regulate that? I mean, how do you stop people from doing that which they would normatively do, which is to create wealth for themselves rather than wealth for all people?

Michael Laitman: I think that very soon, and we've already started seeing that we cannot, today, speak in terms of a competitive world if we're so connected. If we have no regard for each other on some general overall regulator, we'll fail. It seems to me that what we're seeing today in the economy, in all of the big systems between people and countries, that without

mutual consideration, not through competition, but without mutual consideration like in a family, we won't succeed.

Host: What about in America, Dr. Laitman?

Michael Laitman: The Americans, too, will have to learn it. I think for them the ability to learn and to reach such arrangements is better than in other countries, like in Asia, because here the society is more dynamic. It has fewer problems of religion, a particular culture, or specific stigmas. They'll be able to learn it more quickly.

Host: Hank touched upon that, that the reason that the financial crisis occurred is because we are in one financial system, and the fact that we haven't recognized that does not allow the flow of money and commerce to flow the way it's supposed to. If we recognize that, it would get better. Is that correct, Dr. Laitman?

Michael Laitman: [Nods yes.]

Hank Sheinkopf: In fact, we have been under one financial system since Bretton Woods in 1945 (I think '45, '46) called the dollar. And we've been that way since, and it's called the dollar has been the means of exchange for oil. We price oil on the barrel to the dollar; our exchanges are in dollars. The Chinese effectively ended the Second World War, finally, when, I think it was two years ago, they decided to tell the world that if they chose to dump American short-term and long-term paper, which they controlled billions and billions of dollars worth....

Host: We've heard this before from the Japanese and from the Arabs.

Hank Sheinkopf: But the difference is no one has ever had this much American paper. Unless I read it wrong, I mean this is extraordinary. Our economy and their economy, which proves Dr. Laitman's point, are entirely, the economy in the United States and the economy in China are entirely intertwined, as if they were one in many ways.

Host: If America stopped buying their imports, what would happen? They'd have mass unemployment, political instability?

Hank Sheinkopf: That's correct. There's more to it. If Americans stopped buying Chinese goods, and if the Chinese dumped American paper, the world would be in exact chaos. So, the interdependence that Dr. Laitman talks about in a non-existential context is, in fact, an existential crisis.

Hank Sheinkopf: First, we need political parties that work. The best the Democrats can do is defend the new deal; they've been very successful at that. And the best the Republicans can do is nothing because the three things that created modern Republicanism, Ronald Reagan did it, by the way, were....

Host: Tax cuts?

Hank Sheinkopf: No, I'm going to get there. Was a response to the post-Iran hostage world of 1980. He said, "Look, we'll make you proud again; we'll make you strong; we'll build a great defense" - one. Two, well, it's very repetitive. Two, capitalism will conquer all, and three, we will bring a new morality government. Well, the new morality disappears in '86 when a fellow

named Foley, a congressman who's a Republican, gets caught having sexual relations with pages, young men.

Two, the "capitalism conquers all" falls apart when we see the valueless debt of debt financing of everything, and the failure to create real value, and a disaster ensues internationally. And the third one, "we'll make you strong by recreating the military," we see the dysfunctionality of that in the conduct of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

Host: Dr. Laitman will you answer that same question? What tools do we need in order to conquer these problems?

Michael Laitman: I don't think that at this point the ordinary tools that we've used so far are going to help, not army or money. And we're going to see it as the crisis evolves until it teaches us that this is so. From what I have learned, from what I've researched, that's what I see. I think the current situation is very unique; it's totally new; it's unprecedented in humanity's history. I think that we have no solution, and we will not have a solution on the ordinary level that by some kind of government regulation, we can do something. Military force, also, will not help. We can see how the most powerful governments and empires fall, and there seems to be no explanation. But only afterwards, in retrospect, when we consider it and analyze it, then we can seemingly explain it.

It seems to me that we are in a unique situation, and we don't understand that we have a problem with the whole of nature, the conclusive nature. In all of the crises that we're in, this is a global crisis, inclusive in every area of human engagement: in science, in families as I've said before, in the human society, in people's relations. The economy is just...

Host: It's just a symptom of a bigger problem?

Michael Laitman: Yes, right, you're right. And the ecology, look what we've done with the Earth. I think that we are in a crisis with the whole of nature. So now we have to think about a general solution here. We can't just calm the situation down. We can see how there are no ordinary solutions here.

Host: Dr. Laitman, what nature are you talking about? Are you talking about the trees? Are you talking about...?

Michael Laitman: No, by the whole of nature, I mean, it's as if over the years we've taken ourselves kind of out of nature. It's as if we control the plants, the minerals, and animals, and we're not controlled by them. We're forgetting that we are inside of nature; we are under these laws. We don't know what these laws are, but we're affected by them. And now we're in a situation that we are in a bubble inside of it, not outside of it, and that bubble runs by a law, and that law is a law of reciprocity, of mutual consideration. Everything has to be in harmony, and by doing whatever we want, we're creating disharmony.

Hank Sheinkopf: There is disharmony. Disharmony by definition is not just spiritual disharmony, but human beings make up the universe, and when they behave in inappropriate fashions...

Michael Laitman: Yes, it is physical.

Hank Sheinkopf: ...that do not meet what they're supposed to be doing, in fact, they create the disharmony. So you could say, of course, that there's relevance to it. The question is how you

take that and put it into practical terms: How you get the average person to understand? Maybe Dr. Laitman will have a different view.

Host: Dr. Laitman, will you answer that?

Hank Sheinkopf: How do you get them to understand that?

Host: How do you get people to understand that and be in a position where people can act upon this?

Michael Laitman: I think that our problem today is that with our desires, with our thoughts, with who we are as people, that we're, in that, opposite to nature, in our destructive nature, in our desire to use everything.

Host: Okay, I understand that. But how do we actualize it? How do we make it happen? How can we practically...?

Michael Laitman: We are going to have to build a society that will be considerate of all its members around the whole globe. I think that explaining to people that we are in a special situation, and that situation requires a new attitude of us, a different attitude, among ourselves and towards nature. That's the first thing. But when we start relating in this way, only start to explain, we'll see positive feedback in return, and that will help us in economy and politics and technology and everything.

Host: As a Kabbalist, as a teacher, how would you expect to get this idea to the general public?

Michael Laitman: Well, that's very simple. I'm sure Hank will agree that every one of the people now is dependent on society. Every person is dependent on the social environment that can affect him, that can change his views and all that. He's doing that more than we do. I think that if through the media we start affecting people because there is no other choice, just to survive from destruction. So, in that way, we'll be able to force everyone to change, without them wanting it.

Hank Sheinkopf: Until we can get people to understand their place in the world, which is what you're really talking about, Dr. Laitman, that the loss of one species that was created by the Creator is the loss of a universe; that, that species has a particular place, that it has a particular job, and when that is gone, the world loses its balance. Until you get people to understand that they have relevance in their environment, that the things they do matter, that they don't walk through it, we will have this chaos. Because the guys that took the diamonds out of Sierra Leone did not understand that when they left there would be people with missing hands and heads and arms and faces and legs.

The people that did enumerable economic acts did not understand what would occur and when they created imbalance; that's a different issue. Now, how can we get people to do that? The problem there is that sometimes to protect human beings, they create force. What is the force or what is the dynamic that absolutely creates the negative incentive to do that which would injure others or to injure the planet?

Michael Laitman: I think that if we, using a system of explanation, start informing everyone through all the types of media: theater, films, papers, television; if we start giving people the facts that the world is round, that we're all together, tied together, all parts of the same body, that each of us is tied to everyone else; if we show it to people using education; if we start

appreciating people when they are considerate; if we give them this kind of framework, I think that we will succeed, because today there is no other choice. We're in a situation that we will not see success in resolving the solution in another way. Only the human solution can succeed here.

Hank Sheinkopf: The human solution is the place to succeed; there's no question, but I would argue that you are an optimist and I am a pessimist. You are a positive man, and I am a negative man, because I look at the history of the world, and I think of my own reading, and my own travel, and all the things I've seen, of being in countries where I'm doing my work and there's a coup and you've got to get out of town. I mean, I've been through all that stuff.

People did not learn from the First World War, which they said would be the war to end all wars; they didn't learn anything. They didn't learn from the Polish-Ukrainian Civil War of 1920-21. They didn't learn from the gunboat experiences in China in the '30s, and the United States was involved. They didn't learn from the Second World War, much. They didn't learn from Korea. They haven't learned a lot.

It's still, for some reason, about some other portion of the human condition that requires us to, in some cases, I would not blame the United States for this, but in some cases, condemn the other, the other being the other human. Ben ---- has written about this. Jung wrote about it. A lot of other people have written about that "other" out there, and to put that other in a position where he can't injure you. That's a different issue. I don't know how you deal with that. I mean, Kabbalistically you try to educate people into thinking differently about how they behave, that they have to think about the human condition as people being in the same place. Isn't that what you do? How do you do that to six billion people?

Michael Laitman: Well, I've been doing it the last ten years. Before that, I wouldn't even bring it out until this crisis started to emerge. We started talking about it five or ten years ago, but until it actually surfaced, we didn't talk about it; we didn't even disseminate the wisdom of Kabbalah. We started disseminating it because humanity started being tied all over the globe in this reciprocal connection. And we started being in opposition to nature's laws so obviously that nature started displaying the imbalance between the human nature and the common law of nature, which is about the common homeostasis. So, it turns out that we have to explain to people that they have a problem with gigantic forces.

It's not about fixing up the economy or the politics here. It is the first time in history that we have a global, integral crisis of the whole of humanity with relation to the whole of nature in such an imbalance that it's becoming threatening. That's why the wisdom of Kabbalah started to surface, and we can now disseminate it; and that's why we exist as Jews, here at this time. It's not because of our religion, not because of our nationality; it is because, well, we, too, came out of Babylon through Abraham, and Abraham discovered the wisdom of Kabbalah. He discovered the thing about the whole of creation; that we have to be the light of the nations in the sense that we bring them the correction method. And it should happen today according to what is written in *The Zohar*.

Hank Sheinkopf: I would argue that Abraham was an international leader of his time, and therefore, he understood that which internationally today we should understand, which is to get people thinking about something larger than themselves, and frankly they'll probably get along better.

Host: I'd like to thank Hank Sheinkopf for coming in today and sharing some unique, and I wouldn't say pessimistic, I would actually say, in a way, very optimistic views.

Hank Sheinkopf: I would like to be more optimistic, but I've seen in 40 years now, almost 40 years of my career, I have seen world leaders and people even at the most local level, and the sense that it's all about them, rather than about the rest of the world, or the people they're supposed to be leading is what is destructive. Now, if that's Kabbalistic logic, that's fine, but if not, it seems to me to be just good leadership.

Michael Laitman: I still have hope that together we will see a good future.

Host: On that note, once again, as always, I thank Dr. Michael Laitman. Hank Sheinkopf thank you very much for joining us today.