

# SENSITIVITY TRAINING

*by Rabbi Shlomo Jarcaig*

Just hours before his death, Moshe teaches the Jewish Nation a song with his final words of motivation and praises of G-d. It begins, "The Rock, perfect is His work, for all His ways are justice; a G-d of faith, without iniquity, righteous and fair is He." (Devarim/Deuteronomy 32:4) Rashi explains the term "of faith", which connotes being trusted to fulfill a promise, refers to G-d's trustworthiness to pay the righteous for their righteousness in the World to Come. The seemingly superfluous statement of "without iniquity" refers to the reality that even the wicked are given reward for their righteousness, but their payment is in this world.

This does not appear balanced. If rewards in this world are indeed comparable to rewards in the next, should not the righteous be allotted some physical rewards for their good deeds as are the wicked? If the rewards are not comparable, why should the wicked people be denied full payment for the few good deeds they did?

Our Sages teach us (Pirkei Avos/Ethics of the Fathers 4:22) that one hour of spiritual bliss in the World to Come is better than an entire life of pleasure in this world. The righteous are not rewarded for fulfilling mitzvos (G-d's commands) in this world is because any reward in this world would be substandard. Why then do such rewards suffice for the non-righteous?

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (1) explains that when a person dies, his soul, imbued with all the values and character with which it lived, returns to G-d's realm - a "world" where all experiences, including all rewards, are exclusively spiritual. A person whose focus in life was physical and temporal pleasures would find this situation the greatest torture. He would find himself in a realm in which he cannot have the things he truly wants, and he never developed the tools to appreciate the spiritual treasures he does have. He does not value this cache for the reward it truly is, so how can G-d reward him for the mitzvos he did do? He gives this person the physical currencies he DOES value - wealth, honor, luxuries - the remuneration of this temporal world. While such compensation is comparatively insignificant, it is the reward he has chosen for himself. But the person who focused on striving to connect to the Divine, developing his character and G-d consciousness with Torah study and mitzvah fulfillment, the physical necessities of this world are a hindrance. With the demise of the physical body, those limitations are removed and the soul can connect with G-d, fully able to experience and enjoy the ultimate pleasure.

The development of that relationship, the genesis of that G-d consciousness, is the product of the

sensitivity training we choose to utilize during our physical lives in this world. Throughout the just completed Yom Kippur we often proclaimed, "For we are Your people and You are our G-d, we are Your Children and You are our Father. we are Your people and You are our King, we are your designated and You are our Designated." Now, we need to live it!

*Have a Good Shabbos!*

(1) 1891-1954; in Michtav Me'Eliyahu, his collected writings and discourses; from England and, later, B'nai Brak, he was one of the outstanding personalities and thinkers of the Mussar movement

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