

Pirkei Avos: Microcosm of the Torah

The Mishnah is the basis of the Talmud, which is the basis of all our laws. It is our oral Torah, which was given to Moshe on Mount Sinai. So the Mishnah has within it the whole Torah, its purpose, its goal and the way to bring it to fruition. And because Pirkei Avos is the father of the rest of the Mishnah, it would make sense that it too should reflect these ideas.

How do we see these ideas in Pirkei Avos?

Everything has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning is its purpose, its reason for existing, the middle is the action that accomplishes the purpose and the end is the goal, which is the fruition of the original purpose brought about by the action.

The same is true about Torah, it has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning is the Torah, which came before the world, it's the foundation, the purpose and the reason for the creation of the world. The middle is the world, where we work to fulfill the purpose of the Torah and the purpose of creation. It's where we actualize the goal of the Torah, by fulfilling the mitzvos of the Torah and by Torah permeating every aspect of our lives and every aspect of existence. The end is the redemption, the era of Moshiach, which is the goal of the Torah and creation, a home for Hashem in the physical world.

And this is reflected in Pirkei Avos.

Pirkei Avos begins with, "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai." This is the general giving of the Torah, it is the foundation of all the teachings developed through studying the proper way. As our sages say, "Everything that the seasoned student will develop was given to Moshe from Sinai."

Then it says, "and he transmitted it..." And it continues with the transmission of the Torah through the generations which continues to this very day. This is the development of Torah throughout the ages, every generation having its part in the development of the Torah, its unique

mission that comes with its part of the development, bringing the world closer to the goal, the redemption.

Pirkei Avos ends, "Hashem will reign forever and ever." This refers to the era of Moshiach, the goal of all the Torah that was studied and developed throughout the ages. It is the reason and the purpose that "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai."

Pirkei Avos: Virtues of Piety

The Talmud tells us, "One who wishes to be pious, should fulfill the words of (tractate) Nezikin," which means damages. Another opinion, he should fulfill "the words of (tractate) Avos." A third opinion, he should fulfill "the words of (tractate) Brachos," which means blessings.

When there are multiple opinions on one thing, they have to be connected in some way.

We could say: The study of Pirkei Avos, nullifies things that are not wanted, (Nezikin) damages, and it brings (Brachos) blessing and redemption.