

# Pirkei Avot

שְׁנוּ חֲכָמִים בְּלִשׁוֹן הַמִּשְׁנָה,  
בְּרוּךְ שֶׁבָחַר בָּהֶם וּבְמִשְׁנָתָם.

The sages taught the following in the style of the Mishna, - Blessed be He that made choice of them and their teachings.

The above is the introduction, preamble, to the 6th perek of Pirkei Avot.

Masechet Avot consists of five p'rakim. When the custom first began to learn a chapter on each Shabbat between Pesach and Shavuot, a sixth chapter was composed of Mishna-like writings (B'raitot) on the theme of Torah study and a Torah Life. Very appropriate for the Shabbat right before Z'man Matan Torateinu.

Let's take a close look at the brief intro, above.

In essence, we are thanking G-d for our Sages as well as what they teach us.

Does this mean that it is important to know and trust our teachers, the authors that we read, the various people who input into our knowledge and instruction for living a proper Torah life?

I would say VERY MUCH SO!

But let's look back into this week's

sedra. From whose mouth did we hear MA TOVU OHALECHA YAAKOV - and from whom do we learn important lessons of Jewish Life?

Bil'am. Bil'am HaRasha.

Okay, maybe we can say that it is clear that G-d put those words and those lessons into Bil'am's mouth - against Bil'am's better judgment.

Maybe that's the only way we can learn from Bil'am.

And what about Rabbi Meir continuing to learn Torah from Acheir, after he went off the derech - BIG TIME?

Maybe a Rabbi Meir can do that, but we have to be careful from whom we learn. We are not Rabbi Meir, who was able to sift out true Torah from whatever else Acheir had to say.

Be very careful from whom you learn Torah, and really just about anything else. Science teachers and history teachers and literature teachers need to be trustworthy to teach us (and our children) in a proper way.