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[Click here](#) for **Rav Bina's Chanukah Message**. (There are also Chanukah Divrei Torah from 15 members of the Yeshiva staff - two for every night of Chanukah!)



College break is coming! Alumni planning on learning in the Yeshiva during their college break should please be in touch with [Elisha](#) ASAP. The Alumni Shabbat will be IY'H Parshat Shmot (Jan 9).

This week's Alumni Melave Malke will be at the home of Yonatan Stern, 60 Briarwood Lane in Lawrence, beginning at 7:45. For more info, contact mm@yna.edu.

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Snapshot

Rav Bina was invited by the Rav of the Kotel, Rabbi Rabinowitz, to light the first Chanukah candle of the Kotel Plaza's Menorah on Erev Shabbat, Parshat Vayeshev. [Click here](#) to view and listen.

The lighting was followed by an in-Shabbat for the yeshiva, including all night learning Friday night.

Monday and Tuesday nights the talmidim attended parties with their Chug Rabbanim and at the homes of their Shiur Rabbanim.



Rav Bina lighting the Menorah at the Kotel

On Tuesday morning, our Rosh Kollel, HaRav Yaakov Katz Shlit"a, delivered an

inspiring and practical shiur on the topic of *bitachon* and *hishtadlut* - [click here](#) to listen.

HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Miketz

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

"BLINDED BY BIAS"

FOOLISHNESS

The Gemara relates: "R' Yochanan encountered the young son of Reish Lakish as he was sitting and reciting the verse: *'ivelet adam tesalef darko ve-al Hashem yizaf libo'* 'the foolishness of a man perverts his way but his heart frets against Hashem' (Mishle 19:3). R' Yochanan sat and pondered: He asked: 'is there anything written in *Ketuvim* that is not alluded to in the Torah?' The boy said to R' Yochanan: 'is this verse not alluded to in the Torah? Is it not written 'and their hearts sank and they were afraid, saying to one another, what is it that Hashem has done to us?'" (Taanit 9a). The brothers acted wrongly against Yoseph and they now wondered what it was that Hashem had brought upon them.



I once heard from my father-in-law zt"l that the "foolishness" refers to the fact that they did not check their sacks. Upon leaving Egypt they should have checked to see if the Egyptians really had put grain in their sacks. Perhaps they had placed rocks in there instead, or maybe not rocks, for that would be too heavy for the donkey, they might have filled them with something else such as feathers, instead of grain. Had they checked prior to leaving Egypt they would have found the money. This is the foolishness alluded to in the *pasuk*.

STRANGE BEHAVIOR

I believe that their foolishness extended far beyond that. Did they not wonder about the strange behavior of this viceroy? Not just odd, but strange from beginning to end. It is true that Pharaoh, by changing Yoseph's name to Tzofnat Pane-ach, contributed to their not guessing the viceroy's true identity. Had they arrived in Egypt and heard people talking to "Yusuf" they would have figured out his true identity, instead everyone was talking about "Tzofnat Pane-ach". Yet is it so unusual for someone to change his name, or for that matter have the king change it for him? Could these wise and holy tribes not have entertained this as a possibility? It is hard to believe that they did not realize the true identity of the viceroy simply because he went by a different name. It is true that they left behind a Yoseph who was sold into slavery and here before them was Egypt's second in command, but his behavior was so strange, should it not at least raise eyebrows?

At first the brothers are accused of being spies, for no other reason than the fact that they entered via ten different gates. Assuming there are grounds for his accusation, does it then make sense for him to say "I fear G-d" (Bereishit 42:18) and proceed to free nine of the ten spies and send them home because he was concerned for the welfare of their families? Have you ever heard of a ring of ten accused spies, where nine are sent home because of concern for their families? If this viceroy were really so concerned, why did he not just ask the brothers for their home address, they would tell him their address in Hebron and then some

Egyptian slaves would be dispatched with packages of food for the families. Whoever heard of nine spies being released due to concern for their families? (Pollard for instance they do not wish to release!).

Let us assume that they found a way to explain his being G-d fearing it may be that he was from the house of Avraham, whom Rambam says numbered tens of thousands and it is conceivable that one of them eventually became the viceroy of Egypt. Then they discover that the viceroy observes a high standard of *Kashrut*, with careful adherence to the laws of *shchita* (ritual slaughter) the *gid hanashe*, etc. Fine, perhaps there is an explanation for this too. Then they find the money in their sacks. Is it so common for spies to receive gifts for their journey home? The man in charge of Yoseph's house explains the gifts: "Peace with you, fear not. Your G-d and the G-d of your father has put a hidden treasure in your sacks. Your payment had reached me" (Bereishit 42:23). Of course they cannot deny the Divine Providence, but it is quite interesting that the hidden treasure they received was equivalent to the amount of money they entered Egypt with, "our own money in its full amount" (Bereishit 43:21), no more no less.

A DINNER INVITATION

Suddenly, the spies are invited to dine with their accuser. Possibly he wishes to have them undergo a lie detector test. What lie detector does Yoseph have? He has wine with which he is planning to intoxicate them. True this is a valid test, but must they be invited to dine with the viceroy for this? Why does he not simply place them in solitary confinement with no water, so they have no choice but to drink wine? This is how one should treat spies, not invite them for dinner!

The Egyptians were not known for their kindness, a fly in the wine or a stone in the bread were punishable by incarceration or hanging. Suddenly we see them acting with silk gloves towards accused spies. Shimon was given even more of this type of care, for when the spies left for their journey back to their father Shimon was released from jail and given food and drink. Did Shimon not realize that there was something quite unusual happening here?

Why is the viceroy so concerned with the health and well being of the spies' father? Furthermore, is the youngest spy always blessed by his accuser: "G-d be gracious to you, my son" (Bereishit 43:29). Is this also an accepted way to relate to spies? There should be no end to their questions. Then the goblet is found in Binyamin's sack. The brothers may have had reason to believe that Binyamin really did steal it, after all his mother, Rachel, had stolen the idols, yet does it not occur to them that Binyamin's protest that he is not guilty may be correct - after all they found money a second time in their sacks! Should they not have put the two together and said that just as they did not steal the money,

Binyamin did not steal the goblet!

There are questions after questions with no end. Eventually after all the accusations, Yoseph suddenly reduces Binyamin's sentence. He tells the brothers that by the letter of the law the sentence should be: "anyone among your servants with whom it is found shall die" (Bereishit 44:9), yet he is going to act "beyond the boundary of judgment" (Brachot 7a) and "the man in whose possession the goblet was found, only he shall be my slave, and as for you - go up in peace to your father" (Bereishit 44:17). Suddenly all the spies are freed and sent home with the exception of the thief!

THE MAGIC GOBLET

In my opinion the greatest difficulty lies in explaining how Yoseph was able to use his goblet to determine the respective ages of the brothers: "The firstborn according to his seniority and the youngest according to his youth" (Bereishit 43:33). Rashi tells us that the goblet was even able to relate what they spoke about in the privacy of their bedroom. Incredible, a magic goblet! What a mind reader! Let us say they thought that this was the influence of gods and spirits, perhaps the goblet contained some power of impurity that knew how to read minds. Did it not dawn on them that the power of the goblet ceased the day Yoseph was sold! The goblet was able to relate details of every event prior to the sale of Yoseph, such as Shimon and Levi wiping out Shechem, this the goblet does know, suddenly, following the sale of Yoseph the goblet's power ceases, and was unable to reveal their private conversations about anything that occurred subsequent to the sale of Yoseph, such as the incident involving Yehuda and Tamar. Are they not curious as to why this is so? The goblet is unable to tell Yoseph how their father is. Why must Yoseph ask if their father is still alive and how he is, why does he not just ask the goblet?

Even if all this does not prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the viceroy is indeed Yoseph, should it not at least be entertained as a remote possibility? We are not dealing with fools here, these were very wise people! How is that they do not solve this puzzle? Granted it does not take any great genius on our part to solve the puzzle because we have all studied the book of Bereishit and have learned the ending that the viceroy indeed was Yoseph. Nevertheless, I ask myself, how is it that wise people such as these could not have figured out the truth?

The reason that the brothers were unable to recognize the Egyptian viceroy as their brother Yoseph even when the facts were staring at them in their faces was because they were certain that Yoseph was indeed a *rodef* and if not killed, he should at least have deserved to have been sold as a slave to Egypt. To assume that this man was Yoseph would mean a denial of everything they believed! They would rather accept any other explanation, or even be left with a question than admit the error in their ways. This is what Chazal meant when they attributed the verse "the foolishness of a man perverts his way" to Yoseph's brothers. Far be it for us to speak this way about the holy tribes, but the explanation uttered by Reish Lakish's young son was accepted by R' Yochanan.

AN INABILITY TO ACCEPT FACTS

The word in the pasuk for "foolishness" is *ivelet* which comes from the word *ulai* - perhaps - perhaps it is anyone other than Yoseph. They were willing to accept any other explanation just not that it is Yoseph. They were so envious of him, their jealousy was so deep-rooted, that they were willing to believe any far fetched answer rather than accept the fact that Yoseph was now Egypt's second in command. To them the dreams were all lies based on Yoseph's visions of power and grandeur "would you then reign over us, would you then dominate us" (Bereishit 37:8). The obvious answer that Yoseph's dreams had come true and they really had bowed down to him was an impossibility in their minds. Yoseph told them that he dreamt: "Behold! we were binding sheaves in the middle of the field, when, behold! - my sheaf arose and also stood; then behold! - your sheaves gathered around and bowed to my sheaf" (Bereishit 37:7). Is it not obvious that this is precisely what happened? This cannot be! Any other explanation is possible,

just not this one!

The story is told of a Bible critic who refused to accept that Moshe Rabenu wrote the Torah, he would hear of anyone except Moshe. Finally, pushed against the wall he conceded that maybe it was Moshe "but it must be referring to my cousin named Moshe". On a different note, there was a Jew in Russia who was in need of a passport in order to enter another area. He did not have his own so he decided to borrow his neighbor's. As he was traveling he kept reminding himself "my name is not Abramowitz, it is Rabinowitz; my name is not Abramowitz, it is Rabinowitz". He arrived at the point of entry where the clerk there asked him "who are you", to which he responded: "Not Abramowitz!"

It cannot be Yoseph! How does this man know everything that has gone on in our lives he must be a magician! The fact that he is G-d fearing we have an explanation for that as well! We see the effect that envy can have, and this is precisely the foolishness Chazal are referring to. Of course we are not permitted to speak in such a fashion about the holy tribes and we cannot judge them. I am only speaking based on our limited understanding and trying to learn what lessons we can extract from this.

Reuven, the firstborn, does make a connection between the unusual behavior of the viceroy and the sale of Yoseph "Reuven spoke up to them, saying 'did I not speak to you saying: do not sin against the boy but you would not listen and his blood as well Behold! is being avenged'" (Bereishit 42:22), but he only feels that he should have had more mercy, acting "*lifnim mishurat hadin*" "beyond the boundary of judgment" (Brachot 7a) with Yoseph: "Inasmuch as we saw his heartfelt anguish when he pleaded with us and we did not listen" (Bereishit 42:21). In their judgment of Yoseph as a *rodef*, he felt, they reached a true verdict - even he does not draw the conclusion that they had mistakenly judged Yoseph. He is upset at the anguish they caused Yaakov and perhaps at the anguish they caused Yitzchak as well - as Rashi explains in the *pasuk* "and his blood as well - behold! is being avenged" (Bereishit 42:22). Rashi teaches that the "as well" comes to include "his blood, and also the blood of the elder" - the "elder" may be referring to Yitzchak. Reuven understood that he should have acted differently, but to carry this thought to the end and conclude that perhaps they had treated Yoseph totally unjustly, this he was unable to do. Rashi even tells us that when they went down to Egypt they were hoping to find Yoseph and have him released from slavery. This too, however, does not contradict anything they may have felt before they were looking for Yoseph the slave, not Yoseph the king.

WISHFUL THINKING

We mentioned above that the word for foolishness, *ivelet*, comes from the word *ulai* - perhaps. According to the Gr"a when one uses the term *ulai* to mean perhaps, it does not infer that there is strong probability that his doubt has basis, but it is rather a form of wishful thinking. We see an example of this with Eliezer. When asked by Avraham to bring back a wife for Yitzchak, he says "(ulai) perhaps the woman shall not wish to follow me" (Bereishit 24:5). Eliezer expressed this doubt for he had a daughter of his own, and wished for her to marry Yitzchak, thus his *ulai* was wishful thinking. An *ivelet* (foolish) form of doubt is when one convinces himself that the improbable may be true.

Regarding logic and intellect, we are all striving for the same goal to arrive at the truth. When it comes to wants and desires, however, the verse tells us: "one removes himself to court lust" (Mishle 18:1), a person's desires sets him apart

from others. When someone asks me regarding a difficulty in the Gemara, I can explain to him that he misunderstood the Gemara. Should he not accept what I say, I can counter with a proof from Rashi. When he responds that Rashi is also difficult, I can prove my point from R' Akiva Eiger. When he finds that difficult as well, then it becomes clear that he is not looking to understand the Gemara, but he "wants" the Gemara to be understood in this manner and there is nothing I can do to convince him otherwise.

The holy tribes were convinced that their judgment of Yoseph was genuine and not driven by envy or jealousy. We are told that even Hashem accepted the *cherem* they took upon themselves not to reveal anything to Yaakov Avinu, what more proof can there be of their justice?

They refused to concede the fact that they were mistaken from beginning to end. It is very hard for a person to accept the fact that his understanding and assumptions were wrong. The Chashmonaim believed in Hashem, while the Greeks believed in their Avoda Zara, in their elephants. The Greeks may have lost the battle but they were unable to acknowledge that their entire outlook was mistaken. They refused to realize that for Hashem it made no difference whether their army was big or small, or whether or not they sent their elephants all the proofs in the world could not convince them of this.

Bilaam was one of the cleverest people who ever lived. Hashem tells him in no uncertain terms not to curse the Jewish people: "You shall not go up with them, you shall not curse the people" (Bamidbar 22:12). Bilaam however believes that he can get away with it - perhaps Hashem will not understand what he is doing. Hashem sees to it that he blesses *Am Yisrael*. The next time around, Hashem permits him to go with those wishing to curse the Jewish people with the limitation "but the thing that I shall speak to you, that is what you shall do" (Bamidbar 22:20). Bilaam, however believes that he can say what he wants to say and not necessarily what Hashem wants. Hashem then produces a great miracle and the donkey begins to talk. Bilaam's reaction is "so what, the donkey talks, I can also talk!" He refuses to acknowledge that Hashem is the one who is giving the donkey the power to talk. Bilaam is still convinced that he can do as he pleases. His attempted curses are transformed into blessings one time, then a second time, yet he insists on trying to curse *Am Yisrael* a third time. His intent is to curse the Jewish people and nothing will convince him of the futility of his goal, not even the fact that he was not able to stand up to the donkey's rebuke.

The Torah's warning "for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise" (Devarim 16:19) is not limited to monetary bribes. Preconceived notions and desires and ambitions can also blind a person to what is happening right before his eyes.

The term *ivelet*, foolishness appears in another verse in Mishle: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a youth; the rod of discipline will distance it from him" (Mishle 22:15). At times there is no other way to point out how foolish someone's actions are except to use the stick. However, we are also told: "chastisement frightens an understanding one more than smiting a fool a hundred times" (Mishle 17:10) to a clever person, one sharp word can have a greater effect than physically disciplining him one hundred times.

The *pasuk* states "If you crush a foolish person in a mortar with softened grain and pound him with a pestle you will not remove his foolishness from him" (Mishle 27:22). Why is "the softened grain" required for this analogy, could the *pasuk* not have simply said "if you crush a foolish person in a mortar and pound him with a

pestle you will not remove his foolishness from him"? One explanation is that pounding a foolish person does serve to remove his foolishness. When, however, another object is pounded at the same time "you will not remove his foolishness from him". The fool will convince himself that he is not the object of the pounding! It is true that I am taking quite a beating, but what do you expect when you stand next to soft grain. The beating is intended for the grain, I just happen to have gotten in the way!

We have to open our eyes and see that we are not as clever as we think we are - that Hashem is leading the world. We must think with our minds not with our desires and ambitions. When the Torah commands us "do not explore after your heart and after your eyes" (Bamidbar 15:39) it does not mean to tell us not to "look" with our eyes, rather not to "explore after our eyes". The eyes see, but they do not issue the final ruling. By the same token, our hearts can desire and feel, but they cannot be the *posek*. When we use our minds we will see the truth Hashem guides the world. We will then realize that it is His will to bless the Jewish people and to accept Yosef for the *tzaddik* that he is. The Torah wants us to open our eyes and hearts, but only if we use our minds to decipher what we are seeing. Then we will truly understand that Hashem is the Guiding Hand in this world.

Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Mark Mays

When encountering the *parshiyot* we are currently reading, namely *Vayeshev* and *Miketz*, we are confronted with many questions. The primary story which essentially dominates these *parshiyot* is the sale of Yosef by his brothers. The Torah writes in Parshat Vayeshev that the sale was a change in the original plan to actually kill Yosef! When we reflect on Chazal's teaching that the sons of Yaakov were greater *tzaddikim* than we can imagine, digesting this story becomes even more difficult.



I would like to focus on one aspect of this story to bring out a theme which bears pertinence to us all. The Shl"ta explains that the dynamic drama played out in the *parshiyot* is one which is ultimately going to be expressed in the 'End of Days'. This would connect with a recurring theme in the Ramban of: "*maasei avot siman labanim*" that the actions and encounters of our forefathers, will in some way be relived, reenacted and revisited by their descendents. The Shl"ta says that there are two aspects to *malchut* - kingship - in Jewish history. There is the kingship of Yehuda, and the kingship of Yosef. Each of these personalities can be viewed as the prime child of Yaakov in their own way: out of the two, Yehuda was born first whilst Yosef was the firstborn child of Rachel - whom Yaakov had initially intended to marry. The Shl"ta continues that both kingships were a necessary element of Jewish history, and their relationship is such that the kingship of Yosef is destined to be one which first unites the Jewish people (in time represented by Moshiach ben Yosef), and then gives way to the ultimate kingship of Yehuda (whose kingship is subsequently represented by David, and finally Moshiach ben David).

The Shl"ta explains that at that point, the brothers were as yet unaware of the additional dynamic role the kingship of Yosef would play in uniting the Jewish people, being only aware of the kingship of Yehuda. Yosef, on the other hand, was

enlightened to this idea by Hashem Who sent him dreams confirming his status as having some sort of kingship (represented by the sheaves, and subsequently stars, prostrating themselves to him). When the brothers observe the behavior of Yosef and the content of his dreams, they understand him to be rebelling against the 'kingship of David' (i.e. Yehuda, whose kingship will become expressed by David) - which is punishable by death in Jewish law.

After the events we will read about in this week's *parasha* in which Yosef will ultimately become viceroy of Egypt, Yosef understands with certainty what it is that Hashem revealed to Him - that he is also destined to become the uniting force which leads to the coronation of the kingship of Yehuda. As Chazal teach us, Yosef is the primary representation of a *tzaddik* and he reconciles everything he encounters with the understanding that there is no other force guiding this world other than Hashem. He remains in power in Egypt, waiting to see how Hashem is planning to unveil His plan to demonstrate Yosef's role in Jewish history.

When the time comes, and famine strikes all the surrounding countries, Yosef encounters his brothers - who do not recognize him. When he sees them prostrating themselves to him, Yosef is reminded of his dreams, and understands that this is an unfolding of the plan of Hashem. The Shl"i details how Yosef manipulates the events which follow in order to bring his brothers to an awareness both of any shortcomings they may have had which lead to them selling him, as well as to test the brothers by challenging their kinship to the remaining son of Rachel. When they pass this test - in next week's *parasha* - and Yehuda, the expression of ultimate kingship, puts his own life on the line to protect Binyamin thereby demonstrating both his and his brothers' acceptance of the necessity of Rachel and her offspring. At this point, when Yosef sees the brothers united on this issue, he reveals himself to them.

We find ourselves so close to the end of Jewish history, at a time when - as Rav Katz once said - Moshiach possibly already knows who he is, and revealing himself is contingent on one thing: the unity of the Jewish people. Let us take this opportunity to unite in our love for our fellow Jews, and love of Hashem, and bring the ultimate expression of what the Maccabees achieved in their time - a unity of hearts, an arousal to *teshuva*, and the arrival of Moshiach speedily in our days.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom and a Chanukah Sameach

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Announcements from the Yeshiva



**Photo Gallery
Chanukah!**

Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

- [Avi](#) (5759-60) and Michal Geffner on the birth of a baby boy, Rami.
- [Daniel](#) (5762-63) and Shira Kroll baby girl, Talia Miriam.
- [Avraham](#) (Anthony, 5740) and Michal Waller on the birth of a grandson.
- [Daniel](#) Chernikoff (5764-65) on his [engagement](#) to Ariella Wruble.
- Rabbi [Mayer](#) (5757-58) and Noa Solomon on the birth of a baby girl, Efrat.
- [Tzvi](#) Satt (Madrich 5769-70) on his [engagement](#) to Chaya Rachel Weinstock.
- [Avi](#) (Adam) Levie (5767-68) on his [engagement](#) to Stephanie Spinner.
- [Oren](#) (5763-64) and Sonia Schwartz on the birth of a baby boy.
- [Yehuda](#) Gutstein (5764-65) on his marriage to Leslie Erin Cherney.
- [Darren](#) Levin (5761-62) on his marriage to Avital Nyer.
- [Abba](#) (5748) and Zehava Cohen on the birth of a baby boy.

Visitors

The following people visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Zvi Ormonde (5765-66)
- Oscar Russel (5766-67)
- James Silvert (5768-69)
- Sam Fromson (5768-69)
- Yaacov Finn (5765-66)
- Donny Finkel (5768)

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Taube Yehudit bat Temma Gasia
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly bat Yaerah
- Miriam Naomi bat Sarah
- Dov Eliyahu ben Mindel Hudis
- Rahamim ben Miriam
- Hinda bat Sara Leah
- Rivka Zelda bat Bracha

- Dovid Ben Miriam
- Yaackov Chaim Meir ben Miriam
- Avraham ben Leah
- Chaim Naftali Yaakov ben Shifra Shaulah
- Michael Yosef ben Tzipora
- Gidon Shlommo ben Esther
- Haya Rebecca Rivka bat Jeanne Yaffa
- Temima Adina bat Keren Ronit
- Avraham ben Meela
- Bracha Sara bat Rivka Zelda
- Ita Blima bat Malka Fraidel
- Eliyahu ben Victoria
- Chaya Malka bat Rachel Braindel
- Elnatan Meir ben Devorah Ze'eva
- Yahel Liam Gittel bat Rachel
- Shifra Sheulah bat Chana Sarah
- Dovid Chaim ben Brina
- Natan Zelig ben Leah
- Refoel Chaim Simcha Binyamin ben Devorah Aliza
- Menachem Mendal Halevi ben Tova
- Akiva ben Gittel
- Aharon Dovid ben Elke Shprintza Machla
- Eitan Meir ben Rivka Ora
- Shimona Chaya bat Shintamar
- Yaacov ben Ester
- Sharona Chanrna bat Nechama Zviah

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh | Western Wall Plaza | One Hakotel Street | POB 32017 | Jerusalem | 91319 | Israel