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INSIGHT

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INFEATURE

High Court Targets Torah Families

By Argeh Stern

Pictures by JDN, for illustrative purposes





In what many within the Torah community are describing as a defining and deeply troubling moment, the High Court has issued a ruling that reaches far beyond the confines of legal interpretation, striking directly at the heart of *chareidi* family life in Eretz Yisrael.

For years, tensions have simmered between the secular judicial establishment and the *olam haTorah*. Courtrooms, once perceived as distant from the rhythm of the *Beis Medrash*, have increasingly become arenas where the future of Torah life is debated, dissected, and – at times – challenged. Yet even against that backdrop, the latest ruling represents a sharp and dramatic escalation: not merely a legal position, but a sweeping, coordinated campaign with immediate and tangible consequences for tens of thousands of families.

This is no longer abstract. It is personal. It is economic. It is daily life.

At the center of the ruling stands a comprehensive framework designed to strip a wide array of essential benefits from families whose fathers are devoted to *limud haTorah*. With unusually tight and clearly defined timelines, the court has mandated the rapid implementation of measures that touch nearly every aspect of existence – from the ability to secure

a home, to the cost of a bus ride, to the care of a young child.

The scope is staggering.

In the realm of housing, eligibility for subsidized government programs is to be revoked. Access to housing lotteries – long seen as a critical pathway for young couples seeking to establish a *bayis ne'eman* – is to be denied. Assistance tracks that

once provided a foothold for families navigating Israel's punishing real estate market are to be dismantled, removing what many describe as the most basic building block of stability.

On the municipal level, discounts on *arnona* – relief that has been indispensable for families already stretched thin – are to be eliminated. What was once a lifeline in the face of relentless economic pressure is now being severed.

Public transportation, a necessity for daily life, will become significantly more expensive as longstanding discounts are withdrawn. For families where every shekel is carefully measured, even the simple act of traveling to a *simchah*, a doctor's appointment, or a place of work becomes a heavier burden.

And perhaps most painfully, the ruling extends into the realm of early childhood. Funding for daycare centers and after-school programs is to be reduced or eliminated, along with state participation in costs. This is not a distant policy shift – it is a direct impact on young children, on working mothers, and on the delicate balance that sustains the Torah home.

Taken together, these measures form not a series of isolated decisions,





but a broad and systematic policy – one that critics say seeks to reshape an entire *tzibbur* by economic force.

Even more striking is the mechanism of enforcement outlined in the ruling. The court has called for active, coordinated implementation across multiple branches of government, issuing operational directives that go far beyond the traditional role of judicial oversight. In doing so, it has crossed into territory that many legal observers themselves acknowledge as highly unusual: a court not merely interpreting law, but directing policy and shaping reality on the ground.

Within the Torah world, the response has been one of profound concern – yet also of clarity.

There is a widespread sense that a line has been crossed. That what is unfolding is not simply a legal disagreement, but a *nisayon* aimed at the very foundations of Torah life.



Families who have chosen a path of dedication to *limud haTorah* now find themselves facing not only ideological opposition, but concrete, material pressure designed to make that path increasingly difficult.

And yet, the *Batei Medrash* tell a different story.

There is no panic. No retreat. No quiet resignation.

On the contrary.

The *kol haTorah* rises – stronger, clearer, more determined. The benches remain filled. The *sefarim* remain open. The rhythm of learning continues, steady and unwavering.

If anything, the pressure has brought into sharper focus what has always been known: that Torah is not sustained by external support, nor diminished by its absence. It is rooted far deeper – in *emunah*, in *mesirus nefesh*, in a clarity of purpose that no decree can uproot.

This is not the first time that attempts have been made to alter the course of Torah life through external means. Throughout the generations, pressures have come in many forms – legal, economic, societal. Each time, they have sought to weaken. Each time, they have misunderstood.

For the strength of the *olam haTorah*

does not lie in convenience, nor in circumstance. It lies in an unbreakable *kesher* – to the *Ribbono shel Olam*, to the mesorah of generations, to the eternal truth that Torah is the very foundation of Klal Yisrael.

And so, even now, as the storm gathers and the challenges intensify, the response remains steady.

Not retreat, but reinforcement.

Not uncertainty, but clarity.

Not weakness, but renewed strength.

There is an awareness – quiet, yet firm – that moments like these do not define the Torah world. They reveal it.

They reveal the depth of its roots.

The strength of its commitment.

The unshakable certainty of its mission.

For in the end, beyond every ruling and every decree, one truth stands above all:

Torah endures.

It endures not because conditions allow it – but because it is living and eternal, sustained by an inner strength that neither wavers nor fades.

And those who hold fast to it – through challenge and through calm – continue, as they always have, to illuminate and sustain the life of *Klal Yisrael*.



It's a Campaign Against Torah Families'

Adv. Nosson Rosenblat of Emes L'Yaakov Speaks to Hamodia Out on the High Court's Escalation

By: Yossi Golds



As the storm surrounding the High Court's sweeping rulings continues to intensify, one of the legal voices at the forefront of the battle on behalf of chareidi families is Adv. Nosson Rosenblatt, a senior attorney involved in repeated petitions defending the rights of the Torah community.

In a candid and wide-ranging conversation, Rosenblatt offers a rare inside look at the legal struggle, the limitations of the system, and the deeper forces shaping what many see as an unprecedented campaign against lomdei Torah.

First, can you introduce our readers to the organization Emes L'Yaakov? What is its mission, and how has its role evolved in the current climate?

Emes L'Yaakov in Israel was founded and is led by a prominent Chassidic Yid, Reb Yisrael Gefner, who several years ago made a decision to fight on behalf of the *chareidi* public in the legal arena – primarily in the High Court. The organization files petitions on behalf of the *tzibbur*, and to that end it employs a team of *chareidi* attorneys. I have the *zechus* to be among them.

Over the years, we have submitted numerous petitions that have achieved meaningful results on behalf of the *chareidi* public. Today, however, the role of the organization has expanded dramatically. We are no longer dealing with isolated issues, but with a broad and intensifying legal front, where the very framework of *chareidi* life is under pressure.

From a legal standpoint, when High Court rulings are issued as we are seeing now, what options remain for the chareidi public?

The situation is extremely difficult. In many of our petitions, objective legal experts would agree that we are entirely correct. But the reality is that most of our petitions are rejected – largely because of the public atmosphere that exists against us, which inevitably influences the court.

There have been rare instances where we succeeded in reversing harmful measures. One major example was the attempt by a previous communications minister to dismantle the kosher phone system. Our petition halted that move – something of enormous importance for preserving the integrity of the *chareidi tzibbur*, who follow the guidelines of *Gedolei Yisrael, shlita*.

How much real legal room is there to maneuver? Where is the line between what can be changed and what is effectively final?

In Israel, unlike the United States, it is very easy to reach the High Court. But at the same time, there is no binding constitution, and the court allows itself to intervene in virtually every area.

The *chareidi tzibbur* enters this arena from a fundamentally disadvantaged position. The public climate is against us, and that directly affects the judges. In addition, the rulings often reflect



Adv. Nossan Rosenblatt at the High Court.

עו"ד נתן רוזנבלט

בית דין הוותיקים בבניין 1506-04-26



worldview, not just law – you see it clearly in political cases.

And perhaps most telling, there has never been a single *chareidi* judge in that institution. The results speak for themselves.

Have you seen real successes in your legal efforts?

There are quite a number of targeted successes. Let me give you a recent example: This past Pesach, the police closed access to the Kosel due to the war. We petitioned, and we succeeded in allowing people access under a certain framework.

But even that success came only because of a legal contradiction – when protests were allowed in other contexts, we asked, “What is different here?” and received a partial remedy.

There are also victories that cannot be measured. In that same hearing, which was broadcast live, I took the opportunity – before the entire country – to protest a High Court ruling issued on Shabbos without operational necessity. That, too, has value.

And importantly, many cases never reach court at all. When a government body receives a formal warning letter and realizes that Emes L'Yaakov is prepared to go to court, they often back down immediately.

Have you succeeded in easing or delaying measures specifically targeting *bnei yeshivah*?

Yes, though unfortunately not often enough. For example, when former Finance Minister Lieberman moved to cut daycare funding specifically affecting *chareidi* families, we petitioned and halted the discrimination at the time.

But now, when such measures are being driven directly by the High Court itself, the challenge is far greater – because there is no higher authority to appeal to.

Looking ahead, where do you



see this legal battle heading?

We are moving rapidly toward a constitutional crisis. Today already, the *chareidi* community – roughly 15% of the population – does not feel that this institution represents it or judges fairly. Many on the political right feel similarly, albeit for different reasons.

We may soon reach a point where the court issues directives and people simply do not comply. At that stage, every minister, every police officer, will be forced to decide whether to follow court orders.

That is a dangerous path. No one wants it. But unless the judges themselves recognize the situation and exercise restraint, we may be heading there.

There is a growing sense that the High Court is taking an especially aggressive stance toward the Torah world. Do you see this as a deeper trend?

This interview is taking place on what I would call the hardest day for the *chareidi tzibbur* since the founding of the State.

The court has issued a directive that

effectively instructs state authorities how to economically target *chareidi* families – down to specific mechanisms that amount, quite literally, to a financial strangulation.

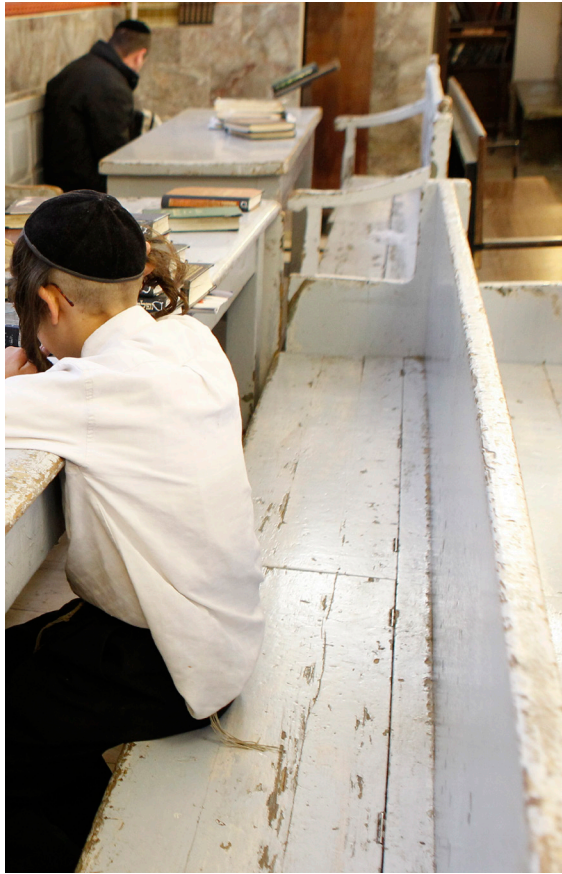
This goes far beyond a “tough stance.”

At the same time, I do not believe this stems from hatred. I believe it stems from a fundamental lack of understanding. They simply do not grasp what it means to be *chareidi*, or why *bnei yeshivah* cannot enlist. They view it through an entirely different framework – and that leads them to take steps that have never been taken against any public in Israel.”

What about equality in enforcement? Is there consistency across different populations?

Anyone living in Israel does not need to ask that question – they see the answer clearly.

There is severe selective enforcement against the *chareidi tzibbur*, and virtually no enforcement against approximately 20% of the population – the Arab sector – who do



not serve in the army, and yet are not subject to similar sanctions.

Even within the court itself, there are judges who never served in full military frameworks, and yet they are issuing these sweeping rulings against us.

Is the legal arena the main battlefield, or are other avenues more critical?

The legal field is not ours. We are operating from a very weak position there. As long as there is no *chareidi* representation on the bench – and realistically, there never will be – there is little expectation of true justice from that direction.

The political arena, however, is entirely different. The court itself repeatedly states that it is acting due to the absence of legislation. If the Knesset were to pass a clear law regulating the issue, much of this conflict would disappear overnight.

How significant is unified public pressure in influencing outcomes?

It is critical.

The court has now deployed what you might call its strongest tools, inflicting massive financial damage on *chareidi* families. But if, over time, it becomes clear that these measures achieve nothing – that no one enlists, because the *tzibbur* follows the guidance of *Gedolei Yisrael* – then the pressure will eventually subside.

Have you seen a shift in the court's attitude in recent years?

Yes – especially since Oct. 7. The shift has been negative.

The media and public discourse have increasingly portrayed the *chareidi* individual in a distorted and hostile light. That atmosphere affects everyone – and judges are not immune to it.

Finally, what is your message to *bnei yeshivah* and the *chareidi* public at this time?

From a purely practical standpoint, legislation could resolve much of this immediately. But such decisions involve complex and sensitive considerations that are the domain of *Gedolei Yisrael*, and we follow their guidance.

As for the *tzibbur*, we must be realistic: The challenges are not over. It may become even more difficult.

But one thing can be said with certainty: This is not the first *gezeirah* against the *olam haTorah*. Over thousands of years, there have been far harsher ones – and Torah has always prevailed.

The question is not whether Torah will endure. It will.

The question is who will stand firm and be part of that victory – and who will fall along the way.

Those who remain steadfast, who follow the path of Torah even in difficult times, will ultimately merit to stand with it in its triumph. ■

