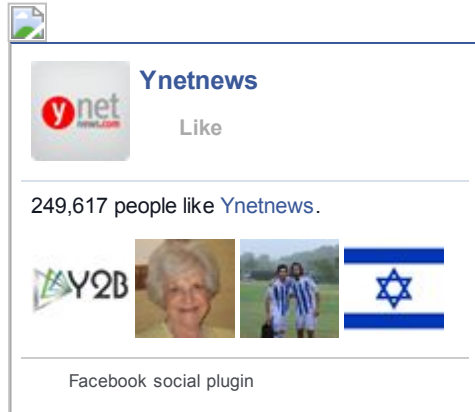




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13 years for pedophile who fled Israel

Judges criticize defense witnesses including rabbis for praising haredi man who was extradited from Britain to face accusations of sexual offences

Yoav Zitun

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Behind Bars



 Nachman Stal (archives) Photo: Dudu Azulay

Nachman Stal, who fled to Britain after being accused of sodomizing a youth of 14 years, was sentenced Sunday to 13 years behind bars.

Stal, who was extradited to [Israel](#) in July last year, received 12 years' imprisonment for sexual offenses and an additional year for evading justice. Tel Aviv District Court also criticized rabbis who had come to Stal's defense.

The legal proceedings began a decade ago, when Stal was accused of indecent acts with a youth he had given a lift to as part of his job. According to the indictment, Stal touched the youth a number of times, and during one particular trip he stopped the vehicle near a bench, in a quiet place, and despite the youth's protests, sodomized him.

Pedophilia

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He then gave the youth NSI 200 (\$50) and instructed him not to tell anyone. The youth finally told the rabbi of the school where he was studying. With support from this rabbi, he then submitted a complaint against Stal with the police.

In 2000, the accused fled Israel to Belgium, and the indictment

was cancelled. A new indictment was submitted in 2005 when Stal returned to Israel, and one year later he again fled, this time to Britain.

The judges, headed by Judge George Kara, severely criticized the witnesses for the defense, including the wife and father of the accused, head of London's South Tottenham Jewish community Rabbi Michael Biberfeld, and Rabbi Yosef Krauser, who supervises the yeshivas in Jerusalem's Mea Shearim neighborhood.

The four witnesses praised Stal during the trial. "There was no problem with him," the London rabbi said. "His actions were completely normal." Krauser added, "I pity his wife and nine children. They say he regrets his acts and he must be helped."

Stal's father said his son was a wonderful person, though he had noticed a decline in his son's behavior since 1990. His father and the defense team claimed that Stal had suffered from a brain tumor in 1997 which had affected his face and limbs.

The court noted that "all the witnesses saw the accused and his family as victims. They also tried to describe the accused as repentant. Why did none of the witnesses refer to the plaintiff, the only real victim? It would be expected of respected rabbis to say something, even if only a word, about the criminal actions of the accused. Why should they expect pity from the court when they don't have any pity for the victim?"

The court also queried whether those same rabbis were supposed to ignore the danger to the public posed by the accused. "Is an offense against someone from outside their community not considered an offense?"

The judges also referred to Stal's acts. "The accused took advantage of the victim's innocence and chose him in order to carry out his deviant acts," they wrote. "The accused tempted the victim a number of times, so that he would be easy prey."


In addition to the penalty of imprisonment, the court ruled that Stal must pay his victim compensation of NIS 50,000 (\$13,500).

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