

At Rabbinical Court, Her Husband Accused Her of Cheating. Then She Lost Everything

When Liora and her husband divorced, she never imagined that she would find herself handcuffed and in a prison cell on the orders of a rabbinical court. Or that the divorce would leave her destitute

Shany

By [Littman](#) | Aug 08, 2019

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On the refrigerator in the apartment where Liora and her youngest son live are magnets with photos taken at family events, which capture moments of happiness in recent years. They're the kind of pictures that can be found on refrigerators in the home of nearly every Israeli family. Everyone is well dressed and well groomed, in high spirits; the images seem to remind members of the household that life isn't just mundane, everyday routine. For Liora (a pseudonym because a court order prohibits publication of the interviewees' actual names), these mementoes of the past are especially meaningful, in light of her current situation.

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After she divorced her husband, in 2013, the Great Rabbinical Court ruled that she was not entitled to half of the house in which the couple resided. Nevertheless, it decided she would share responsibility for hundreds of thousands of shekels in debt that she and her former husband accumulated during their marriage. And on top that, the court saw fit to accept her husband's claim that she had cheated on him sexually.

This is not what Liora imagined her life would be like at the age of 54: no property of her own, mired in debt, living in a rented apartment with her son. A preschool teacher, she works six days a week and every shekel goes toward repaying the debts. The furniture in the living room where we are sitting was donated by a colleague at work, she tells me. Liora borrows money from her daughter to buy birthday presents for her grandchildren. Her life has shrunk to one dimension: a battle to survive and achieve economic independence.

Liora's story is infuriating from many points of view. How is it possible that after 30 years of marriage, during which she gave birth to and raised three children, maintained a home and lived a full family life with her partner – she emerged destitute? How can the legal system allow such situations? At the same time, it's disturbing to think that so many Israeli women don't give any prior thought to their inherently inferior economic situation when they place control over everything related to property and livelihood in the hands of their partners, and their individual rights in the hands of the rabbinical court.

Liora, who grew up in a working-class family in the north, was only 18, and still in high school, when she met Yoram. He was from the Haifa suburb of Kiryat Bialik, was about to be drafted and in the meantime was working as a photographer. After being together for four months – he lived with her in her parents' home – they were married in 1982.

"Yoram was amazing, I was very thrilled by it all, and we were just kids," she recalls now. "Each of us had our own story. He was an only son. His parents died before we met."

Following their marriage, the couple went to live in a Haifa suburb in a small house that Yoram's grandfather left him after moving to an old-age home. It was there that their three children were born. The marriage was "perfectly fine all along the way," Liora says. There were family vacations and other outings as a couple and with the children.

Following his army service, Yoram got a job with an electronics firm and then began working independently, buying a wholesale foods business. The money he invested in that venture came from a transaction involving the land on which his inherited house stood: He transferred the property to a developer, who demolished the house and built four townhouses in its place. Three of them were sold. In return for the land, Yoram and Liora received a few tens of thousands of dollars, and ownership of the fourth townhouse, where they lived for 20 years, until their separation in 2013. One of the legal lacunae that enabled Yoram to dispossess Liora was the fact that the dwelling was never formerly registered in their names.

According to Liora, she was in charge of the interior design of the new home: She chose the kitchen, the marble surfaces, the floor tiles. Over the years the house underwent renovations, in all of which she had a hand. Liora recounts all of this to me in rather laborious detail, but then I realize that this is only part of the list she had to repeat time and again to the rabbinical court judges who determined the post-divorce division of property.

“It was clear to the two of us all along that this house belonged to both of us. That’s how we treated it, and Yoram himself admitted it in court,” she says. “I never imagined the day would come when I would have to prove shared ownership of this house.”

'It's hard for me to describe the feeling, that in a split second your life is taken from you and you're in a closed cell under lock and key.' Liora

The house was not listed in either of their names in the Israel Land Registry, a peculiar blunder for which Liora has no explanation. The same applied to the other three homes, and their new owners (and remains the case). After the developer who built them went bankrupt and fled the country, Liora and Yoram, as owners of the land, became the defendants in a civil suit filed by the other owners.

Liora was a full-time homemaker: “My daughter was born with a cleft palate and underwent a number of operations, and my youngest son suffered from very serious asthma. I was home with them. At age 40, I went to college. I got a B.A. in education and sociology at Western Galilee College. I still hope to study for a master’s degree one day.”

While she was studying, Liora began doing marketing work for the college itself. “I couldn’t afford not to work, of course,” she observes today.

Yoram’s wholesale business ran up large debts and failed quite quickly. After working for some years for the National Lottery, he once more struck out on his own – this time selling slot machines. “During our years of marriage, there were bad times and worse times, but we lived well enough and managed,” Liora says.

Eight years ago, after three decades of married life, relations between the couple began to sour: “Differences of opinion gradually emerged and we grew apart. We had matured, and each of us saw his direction differently. We lived in the same house, we managed a common household, there were Friday evening dinners with the children until the very end – we took turns cooking – and we ran a perfectly normal home, except that we slept in separate rooms.”



Liora and Yoram in their youth. She was 18 when they met.

At one point, however, says Liora, Yoram suddenly went to the Haifa rabbinical court and claimed she had cheated on him and was also violent toward him, and declared that he wanted a divorce.

“He’s a very smart man and an expert in legal issues,” she explains. “When he decided that he wanted to get me out of the house, he went to the court without so much as a word and claimed I had been unfaithful to him and had hit him. He knew exactly which buttons to press. He was the biggest heretic, he hated religion with a passion – and suddenly he goes to the rabbinical court and claims he’s ill, unemployed and down and out. He used the allegation of adultery because he knew it would be effective with the rabbinical court, but there was no basis to it.”

In Israel, under the 1953 Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction Law, two institutions are empowered to adjudicate divorce-related matters (as opposed to procedures relating to the actual divorce itself, sole authority for which resides with the rabbinical court system) and base their rulings on halakha (traditional Jewish law): the rabbinical court and the Family Affairs Court. The decision as to which of the two will handle a particular case depends on who institutes proceedings first. Because Yoram was first, and chose the rabbinical court, it addressed the issue of property division.

‘Dangling sword’

“The law stipulates that marriage and divorce are under the exclusive authority of the rabbinical court, which will pass judgment according to the Torah,” explains attorney Shay Zilberberg, from the Rackman Center for the Advancement of Women’s Studies at Bar-Ilan University (a legal-assistance clinic), who, along with Adi Raz, another lawyer from the center, is now participating in representing Liora. “The second thing the law stipulates is that if one of the parties brings various issues, such as property, into the divorce proceedings, the court thereupon acquires authority in regard to those issues. In parallel, the Family Court Law states that authority over divorce-related issues resides with that body, provided no

earlier suit has been filed with the rabbinical court. The result is a race for authority, which is a totally Israeli invention and in many cases obviates mediation. Both sides are unable to conduct proper negotiations or come to agreement outside the courts, because there's a sword dangling overhead – namely, that the other side will turn to the court that suits it better.”

Following Yoram's allegation of violence, the rabbinical court issued a restraining order against Liora, who was at work when it was issued: “I got a phone call from my son that a messenger had arrived with a document stating that I was not permitted to go home.” She had to move in with her mother.

For her part, Liora rejects outright the claims that she had an affair with another man or that she was violent toward her husband. “I don't know on what basis he decided that I was unfaithful to him. I had no relations with another man during that time. To prove that I cheated, he brought a teddy-bear to the rabbinical court and said I had received it from my lover, and also a letter from a neighbor saying she had seen me with another man.” It was actually Yoram, she relates, who “stumbled” no few times over the years, as she puts it, and she knew – and forgave him.

After the claim of unfaithfulness was made, the Haifa rabbinical court ruled that the couple must divorce as soon as possible. Because divorce in Israel is cause-driven, says Adi Raz, such allegations are accepted in rabbinical courts as a cause for divorce and are considered what she terms a “joker,” in that they override other claims. Still, she emphasizes, unfaithfulness is not supposed to be a consideration when it comes to apportioning property.

Raz: “A woman who is unfaithful must get a divorce automatically, and she is then prohibited either from marrying the person she was unfaithful with, or from remarrying her husband. That is religious law, and not even her husband can forgive her. By contrast, if a man is unfaithful once, the process is not automatic, and for a large proportion of the rabbinical judges it is not a reason for divorce. If it's repeated, chronic behavior, the rabbis might oblige him to divorce. There's a built-in asymmetry between men and women.”

What degree of proof of unfaithfulness do the courts demand?

'Yoram told the Supreme Court that the house belonged to them both, and that should have constituted conclusive evidence in Liora's favor.'
Attorney Zilberberg

Raz: “There is something in halakha known as an ‘ugly act.’ In other words, the reasonable assumption is made that a couple had intimate relations. Let's say, if a couple enters a hotel, even if they weren't photographed, whatever happens is considered an ugly act. Exchanges of correspondence can also serve as proof [of such ties].”

Liora says she agreed to divorce Yoram, but insisted on settling the property issue first. The rabbinical judges thought otherwise. “They

said that first of all we should be divorced. My lawyer and I didn't agree with that. So they [the judges] started to harass us with summonses and kept us in court for hours. They took away my driver's license and blocked my bank account."

At one point, the religious court judge actually fired Liora's lawyer, Eyal Menachem, during a hearing.

Liora: "In one session, I wanted to address the property issue before we talked about divorce. I was afraid that I would be divorced and come out of it with nothing. The presiding judge decided on the spot that he was firing my lawyer. We went out into the corridor. A few minutes later we were informed that the judge wanted husband and wife to enter alone, without their lawyers. I was afraid to go in without a lawyer and I thought it was my right to do so with him. The judge said that if we didn't come in he would call the police and place me in detention. And that's what happened."

The detention, which lasted a number of hours, affected Liora deeply. The handcuffs, the fingerprints and the time she spent in the detention cell itself traumatized her – although it was six years ago, she is still taking anti-anxiety medication. Prior to this, she didn't even have a traffic ticket on her record, she mumbles. "It was terrible, and it felt like eternity. I came out of there humiliated. It's hard for me to describe the feeling, that in a split second your life is taken from you and you're in a closed cell under lock and key, a law-abiding person who didn't do anything."

Zilberberg explains that in the rabbinical court's perception, their client was unwilling to divorce her husband, and consequently was in contempt of court. "The [rabbinical] court has singular authority which no other legal instance in Israel has, to dismiss lawyers. They also have the authority to arrest litigants if they are in contempt. At the same time, the legislators saw fit to limit this authority – it's always possible to go to the [civil] High Court of Justice and say that you were detained on an irregularity."

Liora's attorney, Menachem, did appeal to the High Court: She was released and the lawyer was reinstated. The parties agreed that Yoram would pay Liora 2,000 shekels (currently about \$570) a month because she was not living in their joint home but with her mother.

"On that occasion," she notes, "Yoram said that the property was ours, the money was ours – we would divide everything. So the judge told me that, if that was the case, I could get a divorce without fear. And we were divorced the next day."

Once the divorce proceedings were over, hearings on the joint property issue began in the rabbinical court. Liora and her lawyer requested new judges for the property hearings, and the request was granted. "We thought that because of the dispute between the judges and my lawyer, it would be preferable to have a new panel of judges, who would start afresh." A mediation process got underway. According to Liora, every time an agreement was reached, Yoram would reverse his decision in the next hearing. After a few months, he also stopped transferring the monthly payment to her.

Following the failure of the mediation process and further lengthy

hearings, the Haifa rabbinical court ruled that Liora was entitled to half the dwelling she and her husband had shared. This followed proof of “specific sharing,” after Liora demonstrated to the court’s satisfaction that not only had she lived in the house in question for 20 years, she also had a share in it.

Liora: “Yoram tried to argue that there was no situation of sharing, because I had been unfaithful to him. The burden of proof fell on me. If I had known in advance that a day would come when I would have to prove there was ‘sharing,’ I would have seen to it that the house was registered in my name. As proof, I showed photographs and talked about the renovations. I was very happy when the rabbinical court ruled that I was entitled to half the dwelling. I felt that I could catch my breath financially.”

But when Yoram chose to appeal to the Great Rabbinical Court, in 2016, a new round of legal procedures began, with heavier expenses. The issue of unfaithfulness suddenly assumed a major role again, even though both sides had retracted their mutual accusations of adultery during the earlier Supreme Court proceedings. At this stage, she says, she didn’t quite understand what was going on.

“In the initial Supreme Court proceedings, we both revoked all the allegations of cheating and the other claims, and then I agreed to a divorce,” Liora explains. “As I understood it, the rest of the hearings were supposed to be about the property, no longer about the unfaithfulness – but Yoram brought it back into the discussion. In the Great Rabbinical Court sessions, I felt like I was there but not there. All I saw was a cash register. From my point of view, every hearing in Jerusalem involved more and more legal expenses. I was afraid the entire time of what would happen if I lost the house – about how I would be able to pay for everything.”

At this stage, Liora says, she grasped the enormity of her blunder in not having being quick to file the property claim by herself, in the Family Affairs Court. “That was my mistake,” she recalls. All during the hearings, I had the feeling that in the rabbinical court things were going in his favor. Their way of speaking and the way they treated me – it was obviously not in my favor. In the Great Rabbinical Court especially, I felt that the matter of the adultery was very much setting the tone from their point of view. I always arrived there with anxiety medication.”

Liora’s worst fears came true: Yoram’s appeal was accepted. The Great Rabbinical Court ruled that she had not, in fact, proved “specific sharing,” and thus she lost her claim to half of the house. The judges’ grounds for their decision transformed the case from a standard family matter of the kind that unfolds every day around Israel, into a model case that ended up provoking a public furor.

Understanding the legal issue entails an explanation of “specific sharing.”

Until 1974, attorney Zilberberg notes, Israel did not have a law that addressed the financial relations of a married couple. “Through its judgments,” he explains, “the Supreme Court has developed a kind of common law. Its gist is that in regard to a married couple,

assuming they live in a situation where they cooperate and jointly lead a regular life – everything that accumulates in the course of life together is divided half and half, even if the bank account or the apartment is registered only under the name of one of the spouses. That's known as 'presumption of sharing.' That used to be the judicial norm. Gradually it was also applied to pensions and afterward also to assets the parties possessed prior to marriage. At the same time, the conditions required to prove sharing were softened. Later, a law was enacted stipulating that assets accumulated during the couple's life together would be divided 50-50, without condition. On the other hand, the law stipulates that premarital assets are excluded from this arrangement."

Fluid situation

In the late 1990s, a question arose about the continued application of the concept of presumption of sharing, despite the financial relations statutes mentioned above. That is, whether the sheer fact that the couple were married is sufficient to determine that the property should be divided between them equally in a divorce. A majority of judges agreed that presumption of sharing does not apply – meaning, the very fact that a couple was married is insufficient grounds for assuming that all their property is shared. At the same time, Zilberberg notes, subsequent rulings showed cases in which presumption of sharing could be proved, and still applied. "For example, if a wife shows that a particular asset was shared in certain ways. Let's say, if a woman can prove that every night before going to sleep, her husband said to her, 'How terrific that we are living in a home that is both of ours,' and then, even if the apartment is registered in his name only, that asset is also shared."

Isn't the fact that two people were married for 30 years and lived together in a particular house sufficient to determine that they both have rights to that house?

'He used the allegation of adultery because he knew it would be effective with the rabbinical court, but it was unfounded.' Liora

Zilberberg: "The judgments left out cases where there was a full economic partnership between the parties, but no proof of sharing of property. But there are more clear-cut cases – for example, in which renovations were done on the property and the wife contributed economically to those efforts. In such an instance, the dwelling was treated as shared. In the case of Liora and Yoram, he stated in the Supreme Court, for the record, that the house belonged to them both, and on the face of it, that should have constituted conclusive evidence in Liora's favor."

What's clear, however, is that no clear criteria exist as to when "specific sharing" should be applied. The reason, Zilberberg observes, is that it's a concept that evolved from court rulings and is not defined under the law. "It's all very flexible, there is no guideline – neither concerning property, custody or child support. There are no clear laws, so everything is very fluid."

In the rabbinical court system, the Rackman Center lawyers add, the principle of distributive justice or equal apportionment of property between the parties plays no role. “For a great many religious court judges,” says Zilberberg, “this is not part of their worldview, and in most cases the idea of distributive justice as per its civil perception does not arise as a possibility. They view civil judgments as external to the halakha, and because they attribute significant importance to the halakha, of course, they barely give [civil law] any weight.”

For her part, Liora was shattered by the Great Rabbinical Court’s ruling. “I didn’t understand how this could happen, after I’d been a devoted mother and a devoted wife. I felt it was a total absurdity. But my children told me, ‘Mom, you are strong and we know you are a fighter. You can’t give up now, you have to fight for justice.’”

Her lawyer, Eyal Menachem, persuaded Liora that there was a good chance the civil High Court of Justice would overturn the rabbinical court’s decision. His assumption was that the adultery allegation had played a dominant role in the decision to dispossess her of her house, so there was a high probability that the High Court would agree to intervene. The price tag for an appeal, however, was another 30,000 shekels (about \$8,600) – a sum Liora was in no position to raise. Her youngest son, who had just completed his army service, offered her his discharge grant to help pay for it.



Supreme Court Justices Alex Stein, left, and David Mintz. Ruled against intervention in the rabbinical court’s judgment. Credit: Olivier Fitoussi

However, the High Court of Justice decided to uphold the Great Rabbinical Court’s ruling, even though it conflicted with explicit precedents from the 1990s. Hence, the decision to deprive Liora of her share of the house prevailed. It was at this point that the case captured the public’s attention. Two of the justices, David Mintz and Alex Stein, ruled against intervention in the rabbinical court’s judgment; the third justice on the panel, Isaac Amit, held in a minority opinion that the verdict should be overturned, because it had been delivered on the basis of the unfaithfulness issue.

“My world had been destroyed,” Liora says. “I understood that I was left with the debts I had to repay because we had a joint bank account, but without having half the property.”

In the wake of the resounding ruling – “Unfaithful High Court” was the headline in one media report – the Rackman Center joined Liora’s legal representation pro bono, and requested another hearing. The odds of this happening were poor, but in the end Supreme Court President Esther Hayut decided that she would hold another hearing in the appeal. It will be heard in March 2020 before a special panel of nine justices. Women’s organizations, among them the Israel Women’s Network, Kolech Religious Women’s Forum and Na’amat, joined the petition as friends of the court, in order to present arguments concerning the implications of the ruling for the status of women in the rabbinical courts. The Israel Women’s Network is also assisting Liora in a crowdfunding campaign to help cover her previous legal expenses and the guarantees she had to deposit with the High Court of Justice.

The Rackman Center’s basic argument is that if Liora’s case had been heard by the Family Affairs Court, the result would have been different. According to Adi Raz, “The specific sharing here is quite straightforward, because renovations were made and because there is enough evidence showing that for 20 years the couple’s perception was that their house was joint property. After they separated, there is no reason to suddenly recall historic allegations relating to its registration. The Family Affairs Court would have granted these matters proper weight and would have given her half the house. This point is not disputed by the three Supreme Court justices in the previous hearing. They say only that as a Supreme Court, they see no cause for intervening.”

The Haifa District Rabbinical Court ruled that she was entitled to half the property. Why did the Great Rabbinical Court accept her husband’s appeal?



Justice Isaac Amit. Held a minority opinion that the verdict should be overturned. Credit: Emil Salman

Zilberberg: “One judge cites religious law according to which, if a wife rebels against her husband or is unfaithful to him, she must

return the gifts her husband gave her. Another judge says that he did not have the impression that there was sharing, for all kinds of reasons. The third judge refers to civil law, but from the perspective of religious law. It is true that civil law exists, he writes, but in a religious court, I consider it as though it were the 'custom of the state'; the 'custom of the state' applies only to very clear matters, and because here things were not clear, I am not factoring it in. So he mixes religious law with civil law and arrives at this result."

This is where the High Court of Justice would normally intervene, Zilberberg says, because according to a ruling it handed down concerning property in a 1990s case involving the Bavli family, there is not supposed to be any difference between decisions by the rabbinical court and decisions by the civil court. "There have been cases in which the High Court overturned rabbinical court judgments, because they ignored certain property matters that are customary in the civil courts," Zilberberg notes.

Until the Bavli ruling, he explains, property issues heard by the rabbinical court were adjudicated on the basis of religious law, which in many cases was proved to discriminate against women: "Civil law says that all the property we accumulated from the moment of marriage is joint property. Religious law doesn't see it that way. This has produced very grim results in cases where the man accumulated the property and the woman was a homemaker. The property is not registered in her name and she doesn't have a pension, even though it's clear that she contributed equally to the family effort. The Bavli case involved a woman who was married to a pilot, and the rabbinical court ruled that practically nothing accrued to her. But Justice Aharon Barak stated that in civil matters such as property, the rabbinical court must pass judgment like the civil court. In the case in question, the judgment is inconsistent with civil law, yet the High Court did not see fit to intervene. We are asking the court to prevent a regression."

"There is a slippery slope here," adds attorney Adi Raz. "In the initial High Court decision, two justices agreed that the adultery allegation was the background to the [rabbinical court's] ruling. They quote two of the rabbinical court judges, who maintain that it's clear that if Liora's husband had known that she was 'pasturing in foreign fields,' he would not have given her part of the house. Whereas the Supreme Court ruled back in the 1970s that sexual matters are unrelated to property issues and that there can be no retroactive punishment for unfaithfulness."

The CEO of the Rackman Center, attorney Keren Horowitz, is concerned that mixing the economic sphere with the moral sphere will lead to a situation in which each side will have a vested interest in proving that the other side was sexually unfaithful.

"Who has decided that sexual unfaithfulness is worst crime of all?" she asks. "Unfaithfulness can take many forms. A husband who lost all the family's assets in a stock market gamble – is that a less terrible form of unfaithfulness in terms of the family? You won't see a discussion like this, about 'unfaithfulness,' in the Family Affairs Court. We would enter a whole world of adultery trials, because there would be an economic interest in conducting trials of that sort."

Perhaps the alleged cheating considerations weren't the point? The Family Affairs Court might also have decided that the so-called sharing principle was not proved here, so you would have emerged from there empty-handed, too.

Horowitz: "There is no question that the danger is far greater in the rabbinical court than in a civil court. There's an accumulation of things here. It's also a fact that moral considerations entered the judgment, and that the Supreme Court chose not to intervene in the rabbinical court's verdict, even though it seemed to feel uncomfortable with it. And it's a fact that we are living in a reality in which the rabbinical court can leave a woman destitute after 30 years of marriage, while her partner leaves with plenty of assets. The very fact that things are so fluid and undefined and that every panel of judges can decide differently, is in itself illogical. It creates an impossible situation in which both men and women will be harmed, with the economically weaker side always harmed more."

The divorcing husband speaks

Haaretz turned to "Yoram" with a number of questions on the case. These are his responses:

'I am fighting for justice to come to light, but it turns out that justice costs a great deal of money.' Liora

Yoram, you stated in the High Court that the house belonged to both of you.

"That is something that was taken out of context. If we had stayed married, it would have been meant to serve us both."

You allege that she was unfaithful to you and she denies it, and says you presented a teddy bear as proof. In the end you retracted in the High Court.

"It wasn't like that, I had pictures, there was correspondence. As to what happened afterward in the High Court, I no longer remember exactly."

Why do you think it's legitimate that she shouldn't get half the dwelling you lived in together for 20 years?

"Excuse me, is it her house? It's a house I received as an inheritance from my parents. I sold one house that I received as an inheritance from my parents and I put the money into the family unit. We bought storage rooms with it, and now she will benefit from half of that. With that I didn't argue. The money entered and I am not arguing about it. As for this house, I told her and the children explicitly that when I die it's all going to go to the income tax authorities, and no one will benefit from it."

Meanwhile, Liora is trying to remain optimistic until the court hearing next March, but she looks quite frazzled and weak. "I work very hard for my living, but I'm not managing to get out of debt," she says. "I am fighting for justice to come to light, but it turns out that justice costs a great deal of money, and for those without means it's hard."

Her children are helping her and are protective of her, but she notes that they are also in touch with their father. "Since the divorce, we haven't had a joint family gathering, so I can't accurately gauge the nature of their relations with him," Liora says. "I don't ask and they don't tell; it's not my business. He is their father in every respect, so I am not getting involved."

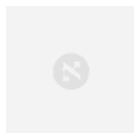
Aren't they angry at him?

"There is anger, but they are trying to be neutral, because they say it's their father and also the grandfather of their children. They felt that injustice was done, but that has nothing to do with relations with their dad. They definitely believe that I deserve to get half the house."

The battle for survival has also made it difficult for Liora to embark on a new romantic relationship. "I had one after the divorce, but it didn't last. I have possibilities, but I'm not available. I'm waging a struggle that takes a lot of my energy and that took away the woman within me. Yoram always said that 'even if we get divorced, as far as I'm concerned you can take it all, I appreciate you and I know how much you're worth.' Instead, I find myself in a situation where my mother, whose income is from National Insurance, is supporting me economically. My faith in humanity has collapsed and I'm afraid to enter into a relationship with someone that I don't know how I will get out of later."

What do you hope will happen after the High Court hearing next year?

"This procedure left me hurt and bruised, and I only hope that one day I will get to have my own home. That I won't have to live with other people. Beyond that I don't dare dream. I heard not long ago that there was another High Court case against a rabbinical court judgment, where something was said that I found appalling. The husband said that it's time women know that if they cheat, they will pay for it, in money. I don't want my daughter and my daughter-in-law and my granddaughter to live in a world like that. I want us to be an enlightened country. That's my aspiration."



Shany Littman
Haaretz Contributor

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