

# Yeshivah, beyond lame

**E**VERY time Yeshivah leaders takes one step forward, it seems they have a unique ability to take two steps backward and this week, they kicked yet another own goal. They rushed to defend Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Groner when he was attacked in a group email, with criticism labelled “unacceptable both halachically and morally”.

But only hours later, when a member of the community wrote a line that many construed as an attack on child sexual abuse victims, the Yeshivah leaders remained silent.

Belinda Cyprys, whose brother-in-law is convicted child sexual abuser David Cyprys, wrote that “threatening to go to the media is not the way to do things, that brings you down to the level of those that caused a lot of this angst in the first place.”

There are a variety of excuses being thrown around by those at Yeshivah as to why they didn't respond. These include that leaders missed the email because there were so many flying around in the long email chain, that they didn't realise it was an attack on victims, that when it was brought to their attention they didn't understand the problem, and that victims are being overly sensitive because the comment wasn't directed at them.

Some of those excuses are far-fetched, but their response when it was clearly brought to their attention by victim Manny Waks was a considered decision and, in the eyes of many, beyond lame.

Yeshivah didn't say the comments were “unacceptable both halachically and morally”, the strong words reserved for the criticism of Rabbi Groner.

They didn't call out Cyprys by name; they didn't even accept that the comment was wrong, but only that some thought it was wrong.

Instead, the Yeshivah leaders simply said that “comments made in this email chain have caused offence to victims of child sexual abuse”.

They said they “do not suggest that such hurt was intended”, that the comment may not have been “necessarily directed towards victims of child sexual abuse” and asked contributors to this email chain “to be mindful and show greater sensitivity towards victims, advocates and their families”.

That mealy-mouthed response from Yeshivah is “unacceptable both halachically and morally”.

Our community will be a better place when Yeshivah leaders put as much effort into defending victims of child sexual abuse as they do defending their own rabbis. Sadly, it seems, we are not at that point yet.