

## **And the world was filled with robbery \ violence. (6:11)**

From the sequence of the *pesukim* it would seem that the Great Flood was the consequence of the widespread corruption. The evil of *xnj*, while is usually translated as robbery or stealing, but can also be translated as violence, is traditionally emphasized as the major source of their transgression. This generation exhibited a complete lack of respect and sensitivity towards its fellow man. It was one in which its people were uninhibited in over-extending themselves, and stealing the fruits of the labor of others. The *Midrash* ponders the reason for the destruction of all mankind. Indeed, the criminals must be brought to justice, but why should their hapless victims be taken to task? What type of moral code punishes the victim equally with the felon? By way of a response, it states that the victims of the crime were also guilty of an injustice. The victims were guilty of a different form of violence, they were guilty of "violence of words".

*Rabbi Noson Tzvi Finkel Zt"l* explains that this violence of words was the victims over-reaction to the crime. True, they were robbed but their cry of indignation was not commensurate with the degree of the injury. Their protest and cry of outrage was in excess of the aggression. This plethora of abuse heaped on the criminal constituted a moral assault on him, transforming the victim himself into the offender. However, the victims were as well guilty of a crime no less disgraceful, albeit, more subtle. There emerged two violators, one who was a physical abuser while the other was a psychological oppressor. No doubt one must object when a wrong is performed, but this protest must be in proportion with the crime that was committed. These two forms of *xnj* were the source of the destruction which befell mankind.