



The Prohibition of Nivul Peh

Introduction

The Source of The Prohibition of Nivul Peh

Chazal and the *Rishonim* mention several sources for the *issur* of *nivul peh* (Inappropriate language):

- The *pasuk* states (*Devarim* 23:15), “*V’lo yireh becha ervas davar*, you shall not see amongst yourselves any unseemly thing.” The word “*davar*” also has a connotation of “*dibur*,” speech. This indicates that one should not use any profane words when speaking. (*Vayikra Rabbah* 24:7; *Targum Onkelos* and *Ibn Ezra* *ad loc.*; *Charedim* 24:49; *Mesilas Yesharim* ch. 11)

- The *pasuk* states (*Vayikra 19:1*), “*Kedoshim tihiyu*, you shall be holy.” We learn from here that one should avoid impure and uncouth things, including unrefined speech. (*Ramban ad loc.*)
- The *pasuk* states (*Devarim 23:10*), “*V’nishmartem m’kol davar ra*, you shall protect yourselves from all bad things.” From this *pasuk* we learn that it is forbidden to think about inappropriate things and that one may not do anything that leads to such thoughts. Since speaking or hearing profane language can very easily lead to such thoughts, it is forbidden. (*See Baal Haturim ad loc.; Tomer Devorah ch. 8; Mesilas Yescharim ch. 11*)
- There are also numerous other sources for the prohibition of profane speech. (*See Tomer Devorah ibid.*)