

Importance of Cleanliness

The high value attached to cleanliness is expressed by the proverb which says that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Indeed, in some religions, cleanliness is regarded as a part of godliness and is prescribed as a religious duty.

In the law of Moses, the priests were required to wash their persons and their clothes, when they had to appear before God, and the tradition of the Jewish elders rigorously enforced the washing of hands before meals. Manometer prescribed frequent ablutions which, if water could not be had, were to be performed with sand.

Such ordinances are in part due to the recognition of the close concoction between personal cleanliness and moral goodness. It is not without reason that white raiment and ceremonial ablutions have been chosen as the symbols of purity of soul that is expected of the priest and his congregation, when engaged in the solemn worship of god.

Even in our ordinary everyday life we see that a dirty man in dirty clothes is apt to lose that feeling of self-respect, which is one of the best safeguards against dishonesty and vice.

Another reason why the founders of religions prescribed frequent ablutions, was because they recognized the immense importance of cleanliness from a sanitary point of view. Dirt is known to be a fertile propagator of disease.

The germs of cholera and other deadly plagues are carried through the air with the dust that is seldom waning under a tropical sun. the best means of avoiding infections continual washing, which prevents those germs from remaining long on the body.

Unfortunately, immunity from disease cannot be secured by being clean oneself. A scrupulously clean person may catch disease from the dirty persons with whom he comes into contact. Therefore, the rich and intelligent must, in their own interests, provide their poorer neighbors with the mean of keeping themselves clean.

Many benevolent rich men have done good service to the community in which they live by providing in crowded quarters of great cities fountains, from which the poor can get abundant supplies of water.

When water is scarce, and not to be obtained near their doors, the poor cannot afford the time necessary to get it from a distance, and remain dirty, to the great danger, not only of themselves, but also of their richer neighbors. This the chief reason why the poor quarters of great cities are often hot- beds of disease.

The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, for example, fully recognizes the importance of these considerations, and has at an immense cost provided an abundant water- supply for this city.

So that there may be plenty of water not only for drinking purposes, but also to water the streets, and wash the houses, the persons, and the clothes of all the inhabitants.