

Since contamination spreads by touch, the pujari must be careful to avoid touching impure items such as the holes of the body, hair, the lower part of the body, the cloth covering the lower body, feet, the floor, or any impure substance. Offered articles are considered impure for one who is going to offer fresh articles. Therefore the worshiper must be careful to avoid touching offered items.

According to Manu, there are twelve impurities (mala) exuding from the body. A person must purify himself by cleansing the body with earth (or soap) and water after he contacts the first six impurities: fat, semen, blood, marrow, urine, or stool.

Water alone purifies a person after he contacts the second six impurities: nose mucus, phlegm, tears, perspiration, ear wax, and exudations from the eyes.

Other contaminating agents are alcohol; low animals such as pigs, donkeys, dogs, and crows; low-class people (mlecchas); hair; nails; bone; corpses (human or animal); the smoke from a funeral pyre; a menstruating woman; eating; sleeping; sex; passing urine or stool; sinful activities; ucchia (food remnants); and the birth or death of close relatives.

Contagious disease is also contaminating. A person suffering from a skin disease, such as eczema, should not enter the kitchen or worship the Deity. If one has sores or wounds that could contaminate the paraphernalia or the Deity, one should also refrain from cooking and worship. A person suffering from a respiratory disease should not enter the kitchen.