


[Home](#) > [Journal](#) > [Social Sciences & Humanities](#) > [PSYCH](#)
[Indexing](#) | [View Papers](#) | [Aims & Scope](#) | [Editorial Board](#) | [Guideline](#) | [Article Processing Charges](#)
[PSYCH](#) > Vol.2 No.9, December 2011



## To Wash Your Body, or Purify Your Soul: Physical Cleansing Would Strengthen the Sense of High Moral Character

PDF (Size: 237KB) PP. 992-997 DOI: 10.4236/psych.2011.29149

### Author(s)

Zhixiong Yan, Daoqun Ding, Liangshi Yan

### ABSTRACT

Physical cleansing, such as bathing or washing hands, is at the core of many religious rituals, suggesting that physical cleansing ceremonies can purify the soul. The present research examines the association between physical and moral purity by the semantic priming paradigm on which the participants made a lexical decision task. There is an interaction effect between the prime word (cleaning related vs. non-cleaning related) and target word (moral related word vs. non-word) which shows a significant priming effect. Thus, we think that physical cleansing would not only associate with moral transgression in memory stage, but also the sense of high moral character in perception stage.

### KEYWORDS

Physical Cleansing, Moral Purity, Moral Disgust, Priming Effect

### Cite this paper

 Yan, Z. , Ding, D. & Yan, L. (2011). To Wash Your Body, or Purify Your Soul: Physical Cleansing Would Strengthen the Sense of High Moral Character. *Psychology*, 2, 992-997. doi: 10.4236/psych.2011.29149.

### References

- [1] Haidt, J. et al. (1993). Affect, culture, and morality, or is it wrong to eat your dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 613-628. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.65.4.613
- [2] Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*, 108, 814. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.108.4.814
- [3] Lupker, S. J. (1984). Semantic priming without association: A second look. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 23, 709-733. doi:10.1016/S0022-5371(84)90434-1
- [4] Meyer, D. E., & Schvaneveldt, R. W. (1971). Facilitation in recognizing pairs of words: Evidence of a dependence between retrieval operations. *Journal of experimental psychology*, 90, 227. doi:10.1037/h0031564
- [5] Neusner, J. (1973). *The idea of purity in ancient Judaism*. Leiden: Brill Academic Pub.
- [6] Rozin, P. et al. (1986). Operation of the laws of sympathetic magic in disgust and other domains. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 703. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.50.4.703
- [7] Schnall, S. et al. (2008). With a clean conscience cleanliness reduces the severity of moral judgments. *Psychological Science*, 19, 1219-1222. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02227.x
- [8] Schnall, S. et al. (2008). Disgust as embodied moral judgment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34, 1096. doi:10.1177/0146167208317771
- [9] Wheatley, T., & Haidt, J. (2005). Hypnotic disgust makes moral judgments more severe. *Psychological Science: A Journal of the American Psychological Society/APS*, 16, 780-784.
- [10] Zhong, C. B., & Liljenquist, K. (2006). Washing away your sins: Threatened morality and physical cleansing. *Science*, 313, 1451- 1452. doi:10.1126/science.1130726

[• Open Special Issues](#)
[• Published Special Issues](#)
[• Special Issues Guideline](#)
[PSYCH Subscription](#)
[Most popular papers in PSYCH](#)
[About PSYCH News](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[Recommend to Peers](#)
[Recommend to Library](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Downloads:	257,719
------------	---------

Visits:	568,054
---------	---------

[Sponsors, Associates, and Links >>](#)

