

WHY DO HINDUS REMOVE THEIR FOOTWEAR BEFORE ENTERING A TEMPLE TO WORSHIP?

Temples are assumed to be holy places. Footwear has dirt on them, which could make the temple floor dirty. Hence, as a respect towards the god's place, people leave their footwear outside. Even the people themselves should be clean when entering a temple; for example, in some places, people gargle with water if they have eaten something a few hours before visiting the temple. In other places, shirts are removed leaving only the dhoti for worship.

Usually, Temple authorities display a board, which says "Footwear is strictly prohibited," since our temples can be visited by people of other religions who may not be aware/care about this respect shown by Hindus.

Additionally, this is not just applicable to temples, but this is also a common practice among people not wearing footwear in their homes. Japan and other Asian countries also have such a practice, and most footwear styles allow for easy removal.

Many times, without realizing the source, the denominational world adopts the same practices found in the Hindu religion. These man made laws appear to provide a measure of holiness not found elsewhere. One young man asked why certain men where he attended continued to wear footwear during the Lord's Supper (Communion) service. He cited the account of Moses before the burning bush when the angel told him he was standing on holy ground (Exod. 3:2-8).

So, let us examine several scriptures that deal with the word "holy," "holy place," and "holy ground" to see the ways these terms are used. The purpose is to see whether we have the right application of each word in each situation.

Before we begin, let us remember several basic truths that must govern our search.

- **Proverbs 30:6—**
Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.
- **Proverbs 3:5—**
Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

If the scriptures do not command it, whose wisdom is it that we must remove our shoes before serving the Lord's Supper?

- **John 14:10—**

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

- **John 12:49-50—**

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Is there a command in scripture to remove one's shoes before praying or serving the Lord's Supper?

- **Acts 7:30-34—Two scriptures mention removing shoes concerning the same event**

And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for **the place where thou standest is holy ground.**

I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

- **Exodus 3:2-8—Was this a common event or a one-time event in scripture?**

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

- **Exodus 26:33-34—God ordained a holy place and a most holy place**

And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between **the holy place and the most holy.**

And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in **the most holy place.**

- **No one but the priests could enter the holy place**
- **No one but the High Priest could enter the most holy place – and that only once a year**
- **Was it a question of shoes or of the people themselves respecting the holy places?**

- **Exodus 19:10-13—The angel of the Lord descended on Mount Sinai**

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and **sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,**

And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

- **Was it a matter of shoes, or the people themselves that could not touch the mountain?**

- **Leviticus 16:3-4—Aaron had to prepare before he went into the most holy place**

Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the

linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

▪ **Shall we require those who serve the Lord's Supper to follow this pattern?**

● **Leviticus 16:5-11—**

And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.

But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

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● **Leviticus 16:20-22—**

And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:

And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:

And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

- **Leviticus 16:23-24—**

And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there:

And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.

- **Leviticus 16:26—**

And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

- **Leviticus 16:29-32—**

And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.

It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments:

- **Leviticus 16:33-34—**

And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.

- **1 Kings 8:5-11—**

And King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord,

So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.

- **Leviticus 16:1-4—**

And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died;

And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

- **Leviticus 16:23-24—**

And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there:

And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.

- **Acts 12:6-8—Is it best to remove one's shoes when one is in the presence of an angel?**

And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

Exodus 19:9-13—Not only could they not touch the holy mountain but they could not even try to look at the Lord

And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live:

Do the scriptures command those who serve the Lord's Supper to remove their shoes?

● **Deuteronomy 4:2—**

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

● **Proverbs 30:6—**

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

● **Proverbs 3:5—**

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

- **If the scriptures do not command it, whose wisdom is it that we must remove our shoes before serving the Lord's Supper?**

● **Some extend this tradition to remove one's shoes before he prays**

- **If anyone wants to follow that pattern – he will find out on Judgment Day whether it was right or not**
- **Shall we impose our judgment on others, or only listen to the one Master?**