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She/Her

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Remember when Twitter was blowing up back in June with people trying to “cancel” the popular K-pop group BlackPink? In case you were not aware, in their release of the music video “How You Like That,” fans noticed a statue of Lord Ganesha placed in an Arabian-style market—almost making the idol look like a prop or some aesthetic decoration. This action was seen as especially disrespectful and ignorant because of the placement of the idol on the floor and in an Arabic setting.

This is not the first time BlackPink and other celebrities have come under fire for their offensive appropriation of South Asian culture and, more specifically, Hinduism spirituality practices. BlackPink previously faced backlash after inappropriately performing Bharatnatyam, a classical Indian style of dance. Additionally, group member Lisa

Think about yoga, one of the oldest practices to exist. It is a group of physical, mental and spiritual disciplines that originated in ancient India in about 2700 B.C., according to India’s Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Many do not know this but it is also depicted in yogic scriptures in Hinduism and has religious connections. Unfortunately this sacred teaching has been colonized by brands, like Lululemon and Fabletics, and influencers, who are paid to sell westernized products like mats, pants and crystals.

Do you practice yoga? Some ways you can make sure you are doing it ethically are outlined by yogi Nisha Ahuja, who educates on ethically conscious yoga practices. To prevent cultural appropriation, you can make sure you are not viewing yoga solely as an exercise, as its true intentions are not for weight loss, and researching how it should be used for clarity, self love and balance. The Sanskrit word for yoga, “yuj,” means to unite the mind, body and spirit, according to MEA. If you practice yoga,

practice it how it ought to be.

With the rise of social media, it has become even harder to prevent appropriation of religions and cultures. From big, like Coachella’s monetization



# When Life Gives You Lululemons

wore a jacket depicting Lord Shiva and Lord Ganesha as a fashion statement.

They are not the only ones, however. Recently Rihanna was called out after posting a topless image of herself wearing a necklace with a Lord Ganesha pendant, which is not the first time that she has been religiously insensitive. Vanessa Hudgens has been in the spotlight for her consistently appropriative outfits at events like Coachella, where she has worn a sari inappropriately as well as bindis and mehndi. Loyal fans have continued to defend these celebrities’ actions, without considering the painful effect it might have on the people of these religions and cultures.

These are just a few examples. Social media has monetized and exploited spirituality for far too long. With celebrities not held accountable for their ignorance, the internet is now at risk of giving platforms to inauthenticity.

of Desi clothing and accessories, to small, like tarot card readings on TikTok, the effect of insensitivity is persistent. Educating yourself on a cultural practice can simultaneously respect its people, honor the traditions, recognize the real experts and enhance your own experiences. If you like yoga now, imagine how much you will appreciate it when you’re doing it right.