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**THEY WON'T TEACH
YOU WHAT THEY
WON'T ACKNOWLEDGE:
30 REASONS WHY WELLNESS
HISTORY IS ESSENTIAL TO
INSTRUCTORS, MENTORS
AND HEALERS**

**HOW DISPARITIES IN CULTURAL
PERSPECTIVES SHAPE WELLNESS
EDUCATION AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP**

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COLONIZATION'S AFFECT ON WELLNESS PRACTICES IN THE U.S.

- **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLONIZATION** WAS BOLSTERED BY THE SPREAD OF DISEASE IN NORTH AMERICA IN THE 1500'S, DECIMATING THE NATIVE AMERICAN POPULATION BY 90% (IE: SMALL POX, MEASLES, TYPHOID, FLU, SYPHILIS)
- ALONG WITH MANY NATIVE AMERICAN **CULTURAL TRADITIONS**, HEALING PRACTICES AND KNOWLEDGE OF HERBAL AND HOLISTIC MEDICINE DISAPPEARED DURING U.S. COLONIZATION (IE: SCHOOLS OFTEN SIMPLIFY THE CAUSE AS "GUNS, GERMS AND STEEL")
- **CENTURIES OF GRIEF AND TRAUMA** DESTROYED NATIVE AMERICAN CONNECTIONS TO TRADITIONAL VALUES AND TRIBAL IDENTITIES. THE LOSS OF LANGUAGE, LAND AND LIVELIHOOD BIRTHED A DIVIDE, CREATING EARLY DISPARITIES IN WELLNESS ACCESSIBILITY IN THE U.S.

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COLONIZATION'S AFFECT ON WELLNESS

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OUR FORGOTTEN "BOTANICAL LEGACY"

- THE **BOTANICAL LEGACY OF AFRICA** IS OFTEN IGNORED IN HISTORICAL LITERATURE AND VERY LITTLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS GIVEN IN REGARDS TO THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS IN PIONEERING THE CULTIVATION OF NOT ONLY AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS BUT MANY WELLNESS, MEDICINAL AND DIETARY PRODUCTS WE CONSUME TODAY (IE: OIL PRODUCING PLANTS, GRASS SPECIES, GRAINS, BEANS, NUTS)
- **HERBS, ROOTS, TINCTURES, PLANTS AND SEEDS** WERE SECRETLY CARRIED ONTO SLAVE SHIPS TRAVELING THROUGH THE MIDDLE PASSAGE IN THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE, THEY WERE EVEN HIDDEN IN THE BRAIDS OF SLAVES
- **AFRICAN HEALING METHODS** WERE OFTEN DISMISSED AS PURELY "SUPERSTITION" AND SEEN AS RUDIMENTARY (IE: HERBALISM, CONJURING, MIDWIFERY, RITUALS)
- SADLY, MANY **SLAVE REMEDIES** WERE WATERED DOWN AND SIMPLIFIED DUE TO THE LITTLE TIME THEY HAD TO GATHER INGREDIENTS - SURVIVAL CAME FIRST

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OUR FORGOTTEN "BOTANICAL LEGACY"

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HEALING PRACTICES BANNED

- **FREEDOM TO USE HERBAL OR PLANT KNOWLEDGE** AMONG BLACK SLAVES WAS FORBIDDEN UNLESS APPROVED BY SLAVE OWNERS - RIGHTS TO HEALING PRACTICES WERE NON-EXISTENT
- **WELLNESS AND SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE WERE OFTEN CONFISCATED** FROM SLAVES AND MEDICINE PEOPLE - SLAVES WERE OFTEN WHIPPED AND BEATEN FOR THE MEDICINAL AND HOLISTIC EXPERTISE THEY POSSESSED
- **PROPERTY RIGHTS** HELD BY PLANTATION OWNERS ESSENTIALLY GAVE THEM THE POWER TO CLAIM SLAVE KNOWLEDGE AS THEIR OWN AND PASS OFF AS INGENUITY
- **TRADITIONAL HEALER RIGHTS** AMONG NATIVE POPULATIONS WERE ALSO REDUCED BY COLONIAL CONTROL, MANY HEALING PRACTICES WERE LARGELY INVALIDATED BY THE SCRUTINY AND DOMINATION OF WESTERN LAW AND SCIENCE (IE: AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT WAS NOT PASSED UNTIL 1978)

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HEALING PRACTICES BANNED

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"MEDICAL APARTHEID"

- SINCE THE 1700'S, DOCTORS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS BEGAN **USING BLACK SLAVES AS "SPECIMEN"** FOR TESTING, CLINICAL EXPERIMENTATION, AND ANATOMICAL DISSECTION (IE: ANARCHA WESTCOTT, THE TUSKEGEE EXPERIMENT, HENRIETTA LACKS)
- SLAVES HAD **LITTLE TO NO AGENCY** OVER THEIR OWN MINDS OR BODIES - ILLNESSES WERE TO BE REPORTED AND MANAGED BY SLAVE OWNERS - SLAVES HAD NO RIGHTS IN REGARDS TO TREATMENT DECISIONS
- A **1748 RULING** BANNED SLAVES FROM ADMINISTERING MEDICINE - SLAVES WERE NOT TO BE TRUSTED IN TERMS OF PRESCRIBING FOR THE SICK - THEREFORE, MANY HERBALISTS AND HEALERS OPERATED IN SECRET TO AVOID THE COMMON MEDICAL SYSTEM

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"MEDICAL APARTHEID"

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YOGA APPROPRIATION | POPULARIZE, COMMERCIALIZE & COMMODITIZE

- MANY INDIAN YOGIS SOLD AND TAUGHT YOGA TO EUROPEANS AS A **RESPONSE TO COLONIALISM** - IT WAS A MEANS TO PROVING LEGITIMACY, CIVILITY AND VALUE TO COLONIAL AUTHORITY
- HISTORICALLY, YOGA HAS BEEN **OBJECTIFIED, APPROPRIATED AND DIGESTED** BY THOSE THAT HOLD THE POWER - YOGA WAS BANNED IN INDIA UNDER BRITISH RULE IN THE 1700'S YET BECAME POPULAR IN THE U.S. BY THE EARLY 1900'S - WE ARE STILL SEEING THE EFFECTS OF IT TODAY (IE: 1993 U.S. YOGA BILL LIFTED IN 2020)
- THE **EXPLOSION OF YOGA** IN THE U.S. WAS OFTEN LED BY CONSUMERISM AND MARKETED TO SPECIFIC AUDIENCES (IE: ELITES, HIGH EARNERS WITH LEISURE TIME OR EXPENDABLE INCOMES)
- YOGA HAS OFTEN PROVIDED WESTERN PRACTITIONERS THE ABILITY TO **EXPERIENCE "THE CULTURE"** WITHOUT HAVING TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE ORIGINS OR TRUE AIMS OF YOGA - MANY FEEL THE PRACTICE HAS BEEN APPROPRIATED YET THE CONVERSATION IS OFTEN NON-EXISTENT WITHIN MANY STUDIOS, TRAININGS, AND WORKSHOPS
- DUE TO YOGA'S HISTORICAL PAST, ITS TEACHINGS ARE SOMETIMES SKEWED OR **WATERED DOWN FOR WESTERN AUDIENCES**, STRIPPING THE PRACTICE OF ITS SACREDNESS (EX: SEXUALIZATION OF TANTRIC YOGA)

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POPULARIZE, COMMERCIALIZE & COMMODITIZE

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ACCESS TO WELLNESS RESOURCES | ACKNOWLEDGING DISPARITIES

- **DISPARITIES IN SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES** CREATE GAPS IN EDUCATION AND EXPENDABLE INCOME - THIS CAN FURTHER DELAY THE PROCESS OF AWAKENING OR WELLNESS-SEEKING WHILE REINFORCING TOXIC FAMILY CYCLES OR LEARNED BEHAVIORS (IE: THINK MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS)
- **HIGHER INCOMES AND STABLE CAREERS** ALSO MEAN GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE OR INVEST IN SELF-STUDY (IE: EDUCATIONAL COURSES, EXPENSIVE YOGA RETREATS, LONG SABBATICALS TO STUDY UNDER MASTER YOGA TEACHERS, ETC.)
- **PRICEY YOGA CLASSES OR STUDIOS** CAN SOMETIMES DETER INDIVIDUALS FROM THE PRACTICE - FURTHER REINFORCING THE NOTION THAT WELLNESS IS "UNATTAINABLE"
- **YOGA MARKETING** OFTEN MISSES A HUGE MARKET (IE: EXPENSIVE YOGA ATTIRE, LACK OF D&I, SLENDER BODY TYPES, VERY FEW MEN)
- THE GAP BETWEEN THE EXISTENCE OF **BLACK AND BROWN-OWNED** YOGA AND WELLNESS BUSINESSES COMPARED TO OUR COUNTERPARTS ALSO REINFORCES NOTIONS OF DISBELONGING (IE: HENCE THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING THE ONLY POC IN A YOGA CLASS, THE NOTION THAT WELLNESS IS A "WHITE THING")

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ACCESS TO WELLNESS

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WAYS WE CAN CREATE CHANGE

- **STUDY THE HISTORY AND COMPLEXITIES** OF WELLNESS AND OTHER HEALING PRACTICES
- **RECOGNIZE** THAT HEALING PRACTICES ARE NOT MEANT TO MAKE YOU SUPER HUMAN, RATHER THEY SERVE AS A FOUNDATION FOR GREATER MIND-BODY CONNECTION
- **QUESTION** WHETHER YOUR OWN THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS ARE CAUSING HARM TO OTHERS - RECOGNIZE AND OWN WHERE AND HOW YOU LEARNED THE PRACTICE
- AS YOGA TEACHERS AND HEALERS, **REACH OUT** TO YOUR FELLOW BLACK AND BROWN YOGIS AND COLLEAGUES TO LEARN FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES, SUPPORT THEIR BUSINESSES WHEN YOU CAN
- **HONOR THE SACREDNESS** OF THE PRACTICE - IT'S TIME WE STOP SEXUALIZING, DEMONIZING, AND BELITTLING
- **BRAVE CONVERSATIONS** - ENGAGE IN THEM - PART OF GROWTH IS A WILLINGNESS TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE AND PUSHING THROUGH FOR THE GREATER GOOD

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WAYS WE CAN CREATE CHANGE

**“THERE IS ULTIMATELY NO WAY TO
CHANGE THE POWER OF HISTORICAL
TRAUMA OTHER THAN
ACKNOWLEDGMENT, AWARENESS,
ACTIVISM, SOCIAL CHANGE,
FORGIVENESS AND HEALING IN EVERY
SENSE OF THE TERM.”**

- KENNETH COHEN

**“WHAT WE OFTEN FORGET IS THAT
OPPRESSION IS EMBODIED WITHIN US.
IT LIVES ON: IT REMAINS IN OUR
HEARTS, MINDS AND BODIES, AND IN
THE VERY SYSTEMS THAT CREATE IT.
WITHOUT CHOICE, WE ARE BORN INTO
THESE SYSTEMS - BUT WE HAVE THE
POWER TO ENGAGE IN HEALING
PRACTICES EVERYDAY.”**

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