

***Casting Indra's Net: Fostering Spiritual Kinship and Community; Wisdom from Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and More.* Pamela Ayo Yetunde. Boulder, CO: Shambala Publications, 2023. 218 pages.**

The term 'Indra's net' in Pamela Ayo Yetunde's book *Casting Indra's Net* refers to the Hindu/Vedic symbol of the net that spans the universe, with each node a jewel that reflects all other jewels. Yetunde invites us to live out of our authentic jewel-like Selves as well as out of the network of mutuality that connects us to each other in the beauty of interbeing. She encourages us to "cast Indra's net" as a practice of recognizing each other as kin and reaching out to one another with compassion and transformative social action. She seeks to overcome mobbery (the energy of violent anger seeking to perpetuate itself) by "expanding our consciousness and heart's capacity toward radical inclusivity" (4).

Yetunde calls for a powerful combination of contemplative spiritual practice and committed social action. Her vision is of the liberation and healing of individuals and society rooted in a cosmology of interconnectedness/mutuality, in spiritual practices that expand the mind and open the heart and social action that is as potent and true as the world-transforming nonviolent resistance of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. The author's sources are her own practice and transformative journey as a black woman, elder, Buddhist leader, activist and chaplain, as well as wisdom and practices from the world's spiritual traditions.

The first chapter laments the suffering created by mobbery. In her powerful second chapter, Yetunde expands the Golden Rule to the Platinum Rule (treating others as they need to be treated) and so moves beyond the benevolent yet still subtly self-centered perspective of the former to the true mutuality of the latter. In chapter 3 she reinterprets the Buddhist Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path to go beyond individual enlightenment to social awakening and transformation. Chapter 4 explores Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan and challenges us to not let social rules or concern for our own security get in the way of tending to our vulnerable neighbor. In chapter 5 Yetunde challenges popular interpretations of the story of Job by telling it as about restoration of community, not restoration of wealth. In chapter 6 she taps into the wisdom of Hinduism by way of the Bhagavad Gita and opens our eyes to our innate oneness with the Divine. Chapter 7 describes us as children of the universe and invites us to experience our cosmic connection through loving kindness meditation. She closes with a powerful letter to Martin Luther King Jr. and her Buddhist kin invoking Indra's net to invite her spiritual community beyond individual enlightenment into social awakening and transformation.

The power of Yetunde's book derives from her vulnerable and passionate voice that is pleading and indeed begging us to wake up to the need to transform and heal individual and social suffering through the wisdom of our spiritual traditions. Her book comes most alive in the spiritual practices that are designed to bring about readers' transformation, by which they become able to realize the teachings for themselves, transform their own lives, and contribute to social transformation.

One example of this actualization of the teachings by way of practice is her exploration of the Baghdad Gita, in which Lord Krishna reveals himself as divine and as one with Arjuna in his deepest Self. When Arjuna recognizes and realizes his oneness with his divine source through the path of yoga, he becomes capable of recognizing all beings around himself as equally one and learns to serve them and rejoice in their welfare. His Self-actualization becomes actualization of interbeing. To help her readers experience this for themselves, Yetunde

introduces the Buddhist practice of *tonglen*. Here, the practitioner uses breathing and visualization to experience herself as cloud-like empty spaciousness that does not need to resist and can instead compassionately breathe in others' suffering. This practice liberates the seeker, connects her to her Buddha nature, and empowers her to expand her realization into recognition of her interconnectedness. This realization flows into social action that realizes true mutuality and interbeing.

Yetunde takes some liberties as she reinterprets traditional teachings to make them relevant for today and for her goal of social transformation. She also freely relies on principles or practices from one tradition to reinterpret or shed light on ideas or practices from another. Many times I found this refreshing and eye opening. At other times I was a little puzzled or felt concerned that she might be minimizing the differences between traditions or not be paying enough attention to context.

Overall, however, the book is an inspiring and bold exploration of interspiritual wisdom in service of individual healing and social transformation that I trust will greatly enhance the work of chaplains and spiritual leaders.

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