



Restoring the Goddess: Equal Rites for Modern Women

Barbara G. Walker

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"In the beginning, in the time that was no time, nothing existed but the Womb. And the Womb was a limitless dark cauldron of all things in potential: a chaotic blood-soup of matter and energy, fluid as water yet mud-solid with salts of the earth; red-hot as fire yet restlessly churning and bubbling with all the winds. And the Womb was the Mother, before She took form and gave form to Existence. She was the Deep. . . ."

With this dramatic, poetic recasting of the Genesis myth, Barbara Walker begins this highly original and fascinating work, which is both an incisive critique of patriarchal religion and a bold proposal to establish a liberating alternative to the Judeo-Christian myth. She envisions a religion and a spirituality compatible with women's essential role in society and free of all the superstition and demeaning imagery characteristic of traditional, male-dominated religion. In place of theology she suggests "thealogy," replacing the academic study of the God concept with a down-to-earth "knowledge of the goddess" - a knowledge that incorporates the scientific understanding of the universe and recognizes the symbolic nature of religious concepts and the psychobiological foundations of religion. Rejecting the transcendent deity of patriarchal religion, thealogy would revere an immanent personification of the real universe, especially of the sacred Earth, the only source of life we know.

Harkening back to the widespread worship of a mother goddess at the dawn of civilization, Walker argues for a restoration of this primal religious sensibility, which celebrated the Earth's fertility and woman's innate power to bear new life. Women are already rediscovering this ancient form of spirituality, Walker shows, and redefining modern religion to conform to woman's new appreciation of their rights and the long history of male dominance.

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