

# WOMAN AS DIVINE

Tales of the  
Goddess



MARIAM BAKER



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Books on Demand

For my Mother

Mother of Beginning

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## Preface

*Sonoma County, 1993.* I thought I knew about goddesses. As a girl brought up in a Sufi community and educated in a Waldorf School, I'd seen them come alive in world mythology and the Dances of Universal Peace. I knew goddesses as the consorts of male deities, each one housed in her particular culture or religion. And perhaps my pre-teen mind was just beginning to grasp that such myths also reflected something unfathomable about the divine play of forces that create our world.

But it was my encounter with *Woman as Divine* that showed me the goddesses' collective power and revealed them as divine archetypes freed from individual mythologies. I can still remember sitting on the sun-soaked living room floor of my childhood home, leafing through the book for the first time, and waking up to something deeply true about the universe. Goddesses were not merely binary reflections of male deities or characters in a storybook, but vibrant, dynamic embodiments of the divine energies of creation, preservation, play, destruction, mystery, compassion, darkness, companionship, beauty, and love. Together, and with *all* forms of divine manifestation—feminine, masculine, or otherwise—the goddesses, saints, and archetypes of *Woman as Divine* represent the expansive, myriad variety contained within the one, absolute reality.

Mariam first published *Woman as Divine* in the year I was born. The Sufi Ruhaniat International (then the Sufi Islamia Ruhaniat Society) was still forming as a spiritual order, and the Dances of Universal Peace were not much

more than a decade old. Practices and prayers honoring the feminine were starting to emerge, as Ruhaniat teachers and students created the gender-inclusive versions of esoteric texts and revisited ancient Judeo-Christian prayers to reveal the divine feminine that, over time, had been lost in translation. Women's groups were sprouting and taking root. And it was into this time of growth and learning that *Woman as Divine* was received and became such an important tool for those seeking access to knowledge and practice that deepens connection to feminine archetypes.

Over the past 30 years feminine wisdom and consciousness have continued to grow and be embraced. Books about feminine archetypes abound, women's groups are a commonplace, and in the Internet age information about any particular goddess is only a click away. But in spite of this easy access and proliferation of practice, *Woman as Divine* remains a significant work. It is both a historic document, marking a time when the consciousness of the divine feminine was growing in importance in spiritual communities in the West, and it remains a living tool. It is truly a rare book that embodies the Sufi worldview of *la-ilaha-il-allah/there is no reality outside the all-pervading, absolute, divine-reality* while also embracing divine archetypes and energies other than the *wazaa'if*, the ninety-nine sacred names of Allah. In this way *Woman as Divine* is an invaluable universalist gem and a beautiful reflection of the Sufi teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan and Murshid Samuel Lewis. This dynamic and uniquely structured text invites the reader on a journey of exploration into the divine feminine, within and without. Into the mystery!

Diana Lyon, New York City, 2012





CLEARING THE WAY

We are all born of mystery and miracle. May the Goddess open our hearts to one another. May this book be a tool to awaken the body, mind, heart and soul to the perfection we are. May this work be free from blindness, illuminated and centered in the One.