



The Altar of My Soul: The Living Traditions of Santeria

Marta Moreno Vega

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Long cloaked in protective secrecy, demonized by Western society, and distorted by Hollywood, Santería is at last emerging from the shadows with an estimated 75 million *orisha* followers worldwide. In *The Altar of My Soul*, Marta Moreno Vega recounts the compelling true story of her journey from ignorance and skepticism to initiation as a Yoruba priestess in the Santería religion. This unforgettable spiritual memoir reveals the long-hidden roots and traditions of a centuries-old faith that originated on the shores of West Africa.

As an Afro-Puerto Rican child in the New York barrio, Marta paid little heed to the storefront botanicas full of spiritual paraphernalia or to the Catholic saints with foreign names: Yemayá, Ellegua, Shangó. As an adult, in search of a religion that would reflect her racial and cultural heritage, Marta was led to the Way of the Saints. She came to know Santería intimately through its prayers and rituals, drumming and dancing, trances and divination that spark sacred healing energy for family, spiritual growth, and service to others. Written by one who is a professor and a *santera* priestess, *The Altar of My Soul* lays before us an electrifying and inspiring faith—one passed down from generation to generation that vitalizes the sacred energy necessary to build a family, a community, and a strong, loving society.

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