



# Marx On Religion

*John Raines*

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## **Marx On Religion** John Raines

"Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions." Few people would ever expect that Karl Marx is the writer of the above statement. He not only wrote it, but he did so in the same breath of his more famous dictum that "religion is the opiate of the masses." How can one reconcile such different perspectives on the power and ubiquity of religion? In this compact reader of Marx's essential thought on religion, John Raines offers the full range of Marx's thoughts on religion and its relationship to the world of social relations. Through a careful selection of essays, articles, pamphlets, and letters, Raines shows that Marx had a far more complex understanding of religious belief. Equally important is how Marx's ideas on religion were intimately tied to his inquiries into political economy, revolution, social change, and the philosophical questions of the self. Raines offers an introduction that shows the continuing importance of the Marxist perspective on religion and its implications for the way religion continues to act in and respond to the momentous changes going on in our social and environmental worlds. Marx on Religion also includes a study guide to help professors and students—as well as the general reader—continue to understand the significance of this often under-examined component of Marx.

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