

Islam in America

Jonathan Curiel

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Islam is the hidden ingredient in the melting pot of America. Though there are between 2 and 8 million Muslims in the U.S., Islam has traditionally had little political clout compared to other minority faiths. However, it has been a part of the fabric of the United States from its conception. African people, brought over in the slave trade, formed the roots of American Islam, their faith challenged and suppressed by slaveowners. Nonetheless, great American thinkers were proponents of the faith, including Thomas Jefferson, who studied Islam, and Ralph Waldo Emerson who spoke of its importance and influence. Since then, Islam has taken on many guises-from slavery, as a part of the Civil Rights movement, as a metonym for extremism, to Middle America; there is now at least one Mosque in all fifty States. Islam is believed to be the country's fastest-growing religion with a vibrant culture of theological debate, particularly regarding the role of women preachers. In Islam in America, Curiel traces the history of America's Muslims. Drawing on interviews in communities from industrial Michigan to rural California, Curiel portrays the diversity of practices, cultures and observances that make up Muslim America.



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