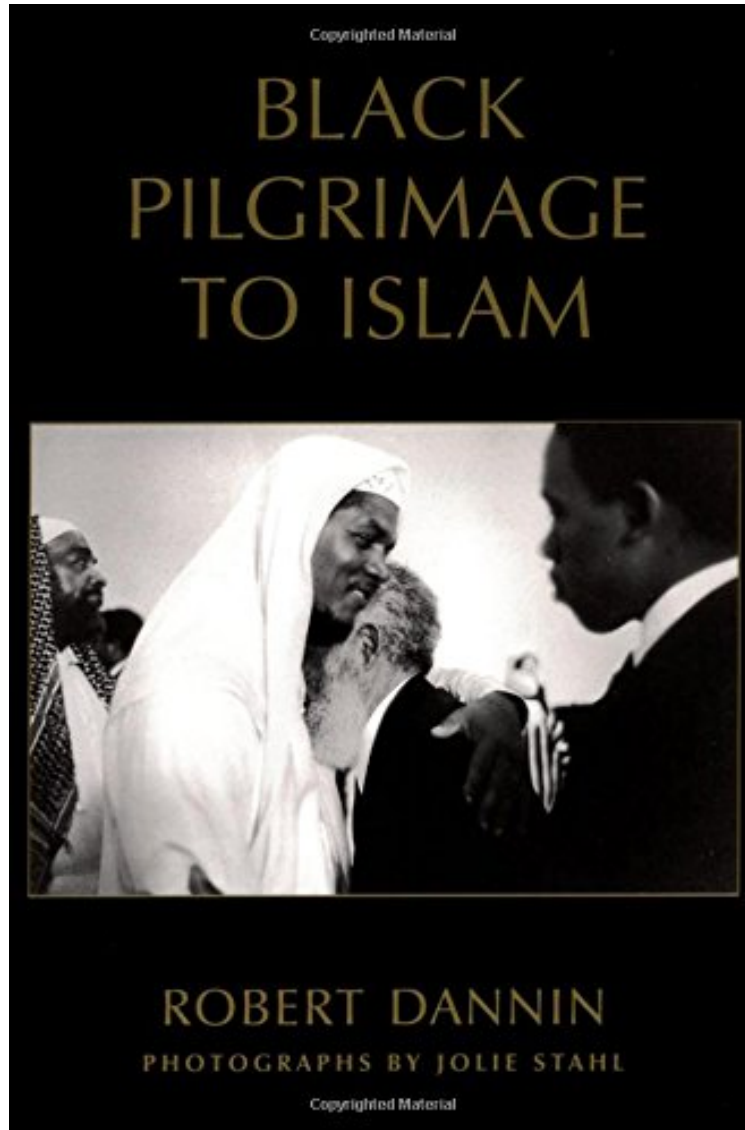


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Black Pilgrimage to Islam

Robert Dannin

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This book offers a comprehensive ethnographic study of African-American Muslims. Drawing on hundreds of interviews conducted over a period of several years, Dannin provides an unprecedented look inside the fascinating and little understood world of black Muslims. He discovers that the well-known and cult-like Nation of Islam represents only a small part of the picture. Many more African-Americans are drawn to Islamic orthodoxy, with its strict adherence to the Qur'an. Dannin takes us to the First Cleveland Mosque, the oldest continuing Muslim institution in America, on to a permanent Muslim village in Buffalo, and then inside New York's maximum-security prisons to hear testimony of the powerful attraction of Islam for individuals in desperate situations. He looks at the aftermath of the assassination of Malcolm X, and the ongoing warfare between the Nation of Islam and orthodox Muslims. Accessibly written, filled with gripping first-hand testimony, and featuring superb illustrations by photographer Jolie Stahl, this book will be the best available guide to the beliefs and culture of African-American Muslims.

From Booklist The term black Muslim generally conjures up images of the Nation of Islam and Elijah Muhammad. But the appeal of Islam dates back to slavery, when many Africans retained their religion, defying attempts to Christianize them. Dannin traces the evolution of the practice of Islam by blacks in the U.S. from slavery through the more orthodox, globalized Islam. The first half of the book recounts the history of Islam among American blacks, the linkage to secret lodge societies, and the rise of black nationalism. Islamic missionaries brought more formal pedagogy but often stirred conflict with their disregard for the historic context of Islam in an oppressed black America. In his conversion to orthodox Islam, El-Hajj Malik Shabazz, better known as Malcolm X, elevated the status of Islam as a powerful alternative to the spiritual monopoly of Christianity in liberating black Americans from the strictures of racism. The second half of this fascinating book recounts individual experiences of conversion and the difficulties of being a double minority in terms of race and religion. Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "an important and ground-breaking book"-- Journal of African American History "I highly recommend this text for those interested in Islam in America, black religion, and American religious ethnography."-- The Journal of Religion "A welcome and important work. this book is an essential acquisition for any student of African American Islam and could be incorporated successfully into courses on wither African American religion or modern Islam."-- The Journal of the American Academy of Religion "[An] effort to promote cross-cultural understanding and to give an image and voice to thousands of African Americans. He succeeds admirably. Among the book's greatest strengths are the Muslims' testimonies of conversion, presented in their own words."-- Sonsyrea Tate, The Washington Post BookWorld "In Black Pilgrimage to Islam, Robert Dannin gives us a rare and fascinating insight into the minds and sensibilities of black Americans who have embraced Islam. His research is impeccable, his judgements are acute, and his prose is uncommonly graceful. This book is an important contribution to American social history." -- Howard Zinn, Author of A People's History of the United States "This book provides a major contribution to our understanding of the process of conversion and its liberating influences in general and of the power of Islamic ideas in transforming rural former African American slaves into urban activists seeking the redemption of society." -- Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University "Robert Dannin provides a very informative and useful contribution to the study of African American Islam. He has investigated a great range of sources, through research and personal interviews, and in this work he allows his subjects to speak first-hand about their experiences and beliefs. The result is a work that is unique both in its presentation and in its range." -- Jane I. Smith, Author of Islam in America "Fascinating"-- Booklist About the Author Robert Dannin was formerly Adjunct Professor of Metropolitan Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at New York University.