

Title: Assignment #1

Amina Douksieh

101012937

Professor: Aisha Geissinger

Course: RELI 2310

The space:

The mosque I attended on November 24th, 2017, is called Jami Omar and it is located on 3990 Old Richmond Rd, Nepean, ON. It is a beautiful big white purpose-built mosque. The prayer room that I prayed at on Friday prayer was located in the prayer hall in the basement. It is a large airy space but filled up once Friday prayer begun. The carpet is blue with a beige circle and detailing inside it, there's also beige detailing all around the blue carpet as well. There's white walls and white poles located in different areas in the room. There is a wall that divides men and women for privacy. There are small windows around the perimeter, and a time clock located on the right side of the room. The prayer room also has a cupboard where there are Quran books to read for the public. There are also fans for the warmer weather and crowded days. The basement area where Friday prayer is located has high ceilings with shining lights. The room was not decorated or had much furniture for the purpose of it being a prayer space for multiple people.

The congregation

There was an estimation of around 350 people, including the men. Their prayer room was not crowded but there was good amount of people there. There was not a lot of diversity in attire, for the most part everyone was dressed similar. Women were dressed in modest attire with mostly hijab's and abaya, and if not an abaya they were dressed in a hijab and modest clothing that covered them. Although there was similar clothing between the women, there was plenty of different colour schemes. Men we wearing a Qamis and kufi which is what some muslim men wear to pray, and if not wearing that they were wearing a long-sleeve shirt and pants. Everyone was faced towards the Qibla (Mecca). There was a section where women are suppose to pray which is behind the men, and a section where the men are suppose to pray which is in front of the women, and it was divided so neither genders can see each other. Only the men were able to see the Imaam who was leading the prayer, but the women could only hear him. Women and men in their sections positioned themselves in a straight row standing feet to feet. There was not any special announcement on where to go and how to position yourself everyone just seem to already know what to do.

The service

Friday prayer is the most blessed day of the entire week for muslims. The rituals involved in the Friday prayer service is first while sitting down, purify your attention, make sure you're attending Friday prayer for the purpose of God's sake alone said the Imaam. Everyone then performed the greeting of the mosque prayer, and everyone was silent while Athan played (call to prayer). The prayer then began and the Imaam delivered a two-part sermon known as the khutbah, with a pause with the two-parts of

the sermon to allow for a time of personal prayer or du'a. After delivering the first part, Imaam sat down for a short while, then stands up again and starts with a prayer. Once the Imaam starts speaking people's behaviours make it clear that their performing religious rituals, because everyone goes silent listening attentively to the sermon, or performing prayer which everyone stood up for and "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) was chanted. Everyone should perform two Raka'at of Sunnah prayer before praying the compulsory one. The congregation was quiet and focused on the sermon, which was about the remembrance of Allah, and how if you remember Allah he will remember you. The sermon also was about having respect for your muslim brothers and sisters and to always be mindful of other whenever one is in need. The Imaam also spoke about forgiveness and how God is forgiving and we should never hold grudges. A lot of people were fixated on what the sermon was about, I could also see that everyone was really touched by the words spoken. The Imaam was mostly speaking English but would quote a few words from the hadith and sunnah in Arabic but would translate it in English. Since the congregation was multi-cultural the Imaam knew if one language was spoken not everyone would understand the sermon, so he would speak in English since it's a common language most people understand.

How religious authority is constructed

The Imaam was the one who was leading the prayer and preached the sermon. The Imaam was wearing a white thobe which is what most Imaams wear, he also had on a white scarf draped over his head, and a long beard. The Imaam was not necessarily wearing distinctive clothing because some of the men in the congregation were wearing

something similar to the Imaam, however you could definitely tell who the Imaam was because he did stand out. This suggest that in islam religious leaders are respected and looked up to for guidance, and once the Imaam is speaking everyone is forbidden to talk out of respect. There was no signs or announcements for how people should dress or conduct themselves because it seemed that everyone already knew what to wear, and how to behave. However there was announcements about turning your phone on silent and for parents to keep their kids near them so they're not disruptive, and also where to park. There was verses from the Quran and Hadith that the Imaam quoted that I did further research on. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was talked about and referred to a lot in the sermon, one of the quotes the Imaam quoted was. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said "That which is lawful is clear, and that which is unlawful is quite clear. Between these two is that which is ambiguous, which most people do not know. One who avoids the doubtful safeguards his faith his honour." The Imaam sermon was also about forgiving each other he also quoted the Quran.

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not love for Allah to forgive you? Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Surat An-Nur 24:22

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

The believers are those who spend in charity during ease and hardship and who restrain their anger and pardon the people, for Allah loves the doers of good.

The Imaam was focusing on the importance on forgiveness, and helping the charity and the importance of prayer. The Imaam quoted the quran

verse:

Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and do not follow up their spending by stressing their benevolence and causing hurt, will find their reward secure with their lord. They have no cause for fear and grief. To speak to a kind work and not to forgive people's faults is better than charity followed by hurt. Allah is All-sufficient, All-Forbearing Believers! Do not nullify your acts of charity by stressing your benevolence and causing hurt, will as does he who spends his wealth only to be seen by men and does not believe in Allah and last day. earth upon it when a heavy rain smites it, the earth is washed away, leaving the rock bare; such people derive no gain from their acts of charity. Allah does not set the denier of the Truth on the right way. (2:262-264)

The Imaam also talked about the food and the needy, and how all muslims should remember the unfortunate and help charity, and he then followed it with the verse from the quran.

Have you seen him who belies the rewards and punishments of Hereafter? He it is who drives away from orphan and does not urge giving away the food of the poor. (107:1-3)

who seems to hold religious authority is firstly god, and then the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) actions in this world. However the Imaam is seen as a authority for the community since he is someone who's practice the religion and is educated about islam than most. If someone was unsure on where to stand its in a Hadith to help you're muslim brother or sister on what to do, however no announcements on that topic was made. I observed a young lady who was not aligned with the rest of the women during prayer, so another women gently pulled her closer to her so she was praying correctly. The announcements that were made suggest that organization of this community is not to judge and if a someone is learning you do not look down on them, you help each other out.

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