Mosque Noor

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I decided to choose to go to a Muslim Friday service prayer at a mosque for this paper. What made me want to go to this service first was because I have a lot of Muslim friends and they always talk about going to a Friday prayer at a mosque. I went to a mosque back home in northern Virginia over the bike race weekend. The mosque is called Mosque Noor, or Masjid Noor. It is located at 8608 Pohick Rd, Springfield, VA 22153. It is fairly close to my house so I decided why not just go see what Friday prayers are about. When I got to the mosque I talked to the mosques owners’ son, his name is Sulaiman Khan. I also met with the Imam who is the guy that leads the prayer, his name is Mufti Shezad. The contact number is 703-980-4098. This is a Sunni Mosque and the date I went was Friday September 25, 2015 and the time was 1:00 pm.

The outside of the mosque is all white and at first when I walked and saw the building it looked like a house. They told me they actually just finished renovating over the summer to make it bigger because their Muslim community is growing. When I went around to the side of the building it looked very different and it looked a lot bigger. They have 4 big rooms for prayer on Fridays, with a bathroom for Muslims to preform something called wudu. This is where you cleans yourself before you pray. There different sections for woman, I wasn't able to see it because they have a strict rule with men and woman pray in different areas. One huge thing I noticed is that they didn't have much parking for the amount of people that were going inside the mosque. I glanced to my left and saw people walking from the church parking lot right next door. I was told that the mosque and the church have an understanding where if either of them runs out of parking they can assist each other without problems. That was very shocking to me.

The people in the community were of all different races, white, black, Hispanic, and middle eastern. Everyone is very friendly with smiling faces. They greeted me like I was one of them and it made me feel like I was a part of their community. The ages ranged from like 60 to kids that are 4 years old. But the majority of people were middle aged about 40 years old. There were a lot of men but I didn't get to see how many woman were there exactly. I would say about 250 people were there.

At first I was uncomfortable with meeting so many different people. Later they made me feel like I was a part of their community and I got comfortable and asked questions and it went on to be a great experience. Sulaiman offered to sit and talk to me. He was very polite and explained a lot of things to me. It was easy for me to talk to him because he's my age and a couple of my friends know him and told me good things about him. At the end of the prayed I talked to the Mufti Shezad, he was also very polite.
I experienced something at the mosque, something that I have never experienced before in my life. Basically at a Friday prayer in a mosque there is a person or what you call an Imam who leads an eventful prayer. In the beginning he talks through a microphone about the prophet Muhammed. He lectures about him and how the prophet lived his life. Sometimes he spoke in English and sometimes he spoke another language called Urdu. I am familiar with this language because my friends speak it very often. The reason he speaks Urdu is because majority of the people in the mosque are from countries such as Pakistan and India. Most people can understand him when he is speaking. After he is done with his lecture (called a khutba) he starts to recite words in Arabic from the Qur’an. I was told that they have a khutba and a recitation of the same Arabic words every Friday. They begin the prayer and everyone follows the imam (leader). The prayer is called Jummah and all the Muslims follow the imams every move. When the Imam says Allah-U-Akbar they move to the next step in the prayer. They start standing while standing up and then bend over to put their hands on their knees (called Rukhoo) and follow with a type of bowing to the ground twice (called Sajda) and come back up. They end the prayer on the second time they go down into Sajda. I have never seen so many people in sync with one another in prayer. It is dead silent and the only person speaking is the imam. After they are done they make supplication to Allah for their sins to be forgiven, for people around the world who are sick and hungry to be helped. They pray to make themselves better Muslims day by day. One weird thing I saw was that there were kids there about the age of 4 or 5 with their father and they were so obedient and quiet the whole time of the prayer. The Opening of the prayer was very dramatic and loud because the leader was reciting the words with passion, clearly, and with power. After the first time they went down for Sajda it became very casual but still loudness so everyone could hear without any problems. The congregational participation was reserved for most of the time. Everyone is silent and keeps to just listening to the words flowing out of the imams mouth. I would say that the Friday prayer was definitely ritualistic. Especially that now I know that they do this every Friday and everyone gathers, no matter how close you are to a person. No chairs, everyone sits on the ground, it really makes you feel like this religion is so simple and pure to follow. I say its ritualistic because I feel as if when they pray every Friday and its mandatory for Muslim men to attend this every Friday unless not in good health. The service ends with the imam (leader) looking to his right and then to his left, then followed by a supplication to their god Allah. Some people pray some more on their own and some go outside to say hello to their beloved brothers and sisters with the sisters. There were no images at all in the mosque, but instead they had book shelves where many Qur'an's were put. The Qur'an's they had were in multiple languages and even English which was very shocking to see. The rituals that were done here were things such as donating money to the poor or to the mosque who donate it to the poor. On Fridays at Jummah, it is said that if you ask for forgiveness and pray to god that your prayers will be answered and god will be merciful if you are sincere. Another ritual is the gathering of all the Muslim brothers and all the Muslim sisters. They come together on this very day just to pray Jummah.

To conclude this trip I had to the mosque I just want to say a few words. In today's world
Muslims appear to be the bad people and to be hated a lot. I feel like people don’t really know who the Muslims are and who or what they present. After this weekend, I would never suspect a Muslim for anything just because he or she is Muslim or wears a scarf to cover herself. The religion seems very peaceful to me and doesn’t seem like it’s very radical or extreme. I enjoyed my time in the mosque getting to meet Sulaiman, his friends and all the people in the mosque. It felt like there was just another energy and that people were just together no matter the race or the color.

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