

Women's Protest at Mosque Causes Anger

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By Laurie Goodstein

Last October, on the night before Ramadan , Asra Nomani entered her mosque through the front door. A man who was a mosque leader said, "Use the sister's entrance." She refused and kept walking through the front door.

Eleven days later, she sat in the main prayer area, behind the rows of men, but not in the back with the other women. She was told to move back to the women's prayer area. Ms. Nomani refused to move.

Many people at the mosque were upset by Ms. Nomani's actions. Thirty-five members of the mosque had signed a paper asking that Ms. Nomani not be allowed back into the mosque. Mr. Hany Ammar, president of the mosque in Morgantown, West Virginia, said Ms. Nomani was going against Islamic tradition. "We stand side by side in prayer," he said. "Our shoulders touch. Men want to be private from women."

"This is part of the war within Islam for how its defined in the world," said Ms. Nomani in response. "I've seen that if we don't assert ourselves, we loose our religion to those who speak the loudest and act the toughest."

The mosque has not decided yet if Ms. Nomani can stay or not.

Vocabulary

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| 1. refused | a. what people do |
| 2. upset | b. do alone, or only with certain people |
| 3. actions | c. what something means |
| 4. tradition | d. how people have done something for many years |
| 5. private | e. not happy |
| 6. defined | f. tell people what you think or feel |
| 7. assert | g. not doing what someone asked you to do |

True/False

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| 1. Ms. Nomani entered the back door of the mosque. | T F |
| 2. Men and women use different doors at this mosque. | T F |
| 3. When asked to move to the woman's prayer area,
Ms. Nomani moved. | T F |
| 4. The mosque president had a problem with what
Ms. Nomani was doing. | T F |
| 5. Twenty-five members of the mosque signed a paper saying
Ms. Nomani should not be in the mosque anymore. | T F |
| 6. Ms. Namani does not agree with how the
mosque is being run. | T F |
| 7. The story happened during Ramadan. | T F |

What do you think?

1. Why do you think Ms. Nomani didn't use the women's entrance?

2. Should Ms. Nomani have followed the rules? Why or why not?

3. What would you do in this situation? How would you deal with a rule or law you don't agree with?